Week ending May 17 1952
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JOHN BULL

"I am captured and meet Rommel, the Desert Fox"
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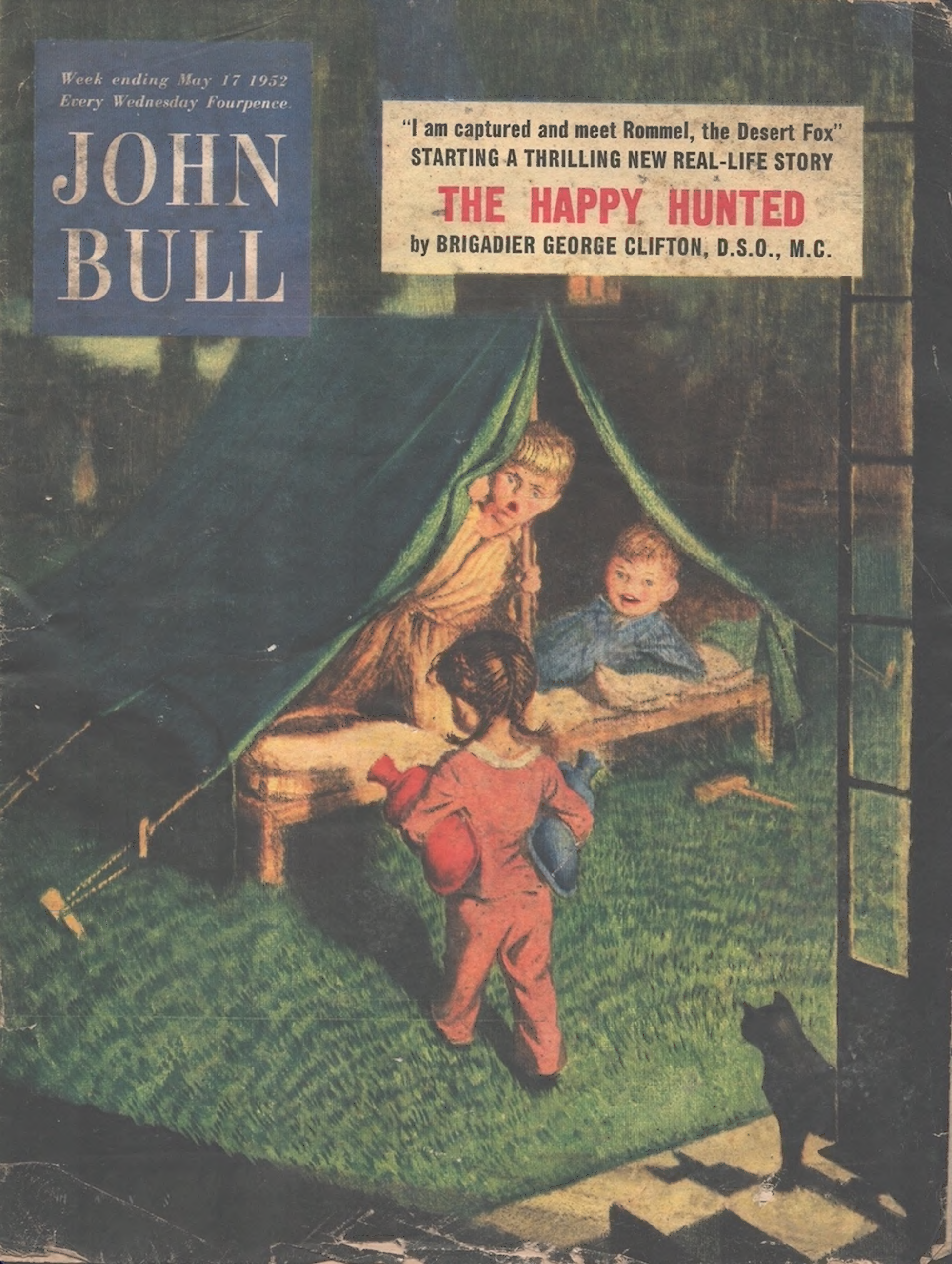
THE HAPPY HUNTED

by BRIGADIER GEORGE CLIFTON, D.S.O., M.C.



how he boasts. Anything to make himself important."

"Oh, I know. I only wondered. . . ."

They walked along side by side without speaking.

* * *

The setting sun illuminated the west façade of the house. Inspector Curry looked towards it. "Is this about the place where you stopped your car last night?" he asked.

Alex Restarick stood back a little as though considering. "Near enough," he said. "It's difficult to tell exactly because of the fog. Yes, I should say this was the place."

"Dodgett!" said Inspector Curry.

Police Constable Dodgett, who had been holding himself at the ready, started spasmodically into motion. He hurled himself across the intervening space of lawn in a diagonal line towards the house, reached the terrace, went in by the side door. A few moments later the curtains of one of the windows were violently agitated. Then Constable Dodgett reappeared out of the garden door and ran back to rejoin them, breathing like a steam engine.

"Two minutes and forty-two seconds," said Inspector Curry, clicking the stop-watch with which he had been timing him. "They don't take long, these things, do they?" His tone was pleasantly conversational.

"I presume it was *my* supposed movements you were timing?" said Alex.

"I'm just pointing out that you had the opportunity to do the murder. That's all, Mr. Restarick. I'm not making any accusations—as yet."

For the first time Alex seemed put out. "Really, Inspector—you can't honestly think I did it. Or that I'd send a box of poisoned chocolates to Mrs. Serrocold with my card inside?"

"That might be what we are meant to think. There's such a thing as a double bluff, Mr. Restarick."

"Oh, I see. How ingenious you are."

INSPECTOR CURRY cast a quiet sideways glance at the young man. He noted the slightly pointed ears, the un-English, Mongolian type of face, the eyes that danced with mischievous mockery. It would have been hard at any time to know what Alex was thinking.

Constable Dodgett, having recovered his breath, now spoke. "I moved the curtains as you told me, sir," he said, "and counted thirty. I noticed that the curtains have a hook torn off at the top. Means that there's a gap. You'd see the light in the room from outside."

Inspector Curry said to Alex: "Did you notice light streaming out from the windows last night?"

"I couldn't see the house at all because of the fog. I told you so."

"Fog's patchy, though. Sometimes it clears for a minute here and there."

"It never cleared so that I could see the house—the main part, that is. The gymnasium building close at hand loomed up out of the mist in a deliciously insubstantial way. It gave a perfect illusion of dock warehouses. As I told you, I am putting on a Limehouse ballet and——"

"You told me," agreed Inspector Curry.

"One gets in the habit, you know, of looking at things from the point of view of a stage set, rather than from the point of view of reality."

"I daresay. And yet a stage set's real enough, isn't it, Mr. Restarick?"

"I don't see exactly what you mean, Inspector."

"Well, it's made of real materials—canvas and wood and paint and cardboard. The illusion is in the eye of the beholder, not in the set itself. That, as I say, is real enough, as real behind the scenes as it is in front."

Alex stared at him. "Now that, you know, is a *very* penetrating remark, Inspector. It's given me an idea."

"For another ballet?"

"No, not for another ballet. . . . Dear me, I wonder if we've all been rather stupid?"

To be continued next week

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 18 is of Anna Neagle when a child.

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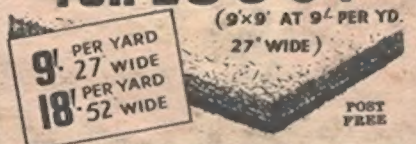
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War on the pests

THE BOYS PLEADED: "We didn't realize we were doing any harm. We thought we were killing a tree rat."

Accused of cruelty to squirrels, they had been paid by farmers for every squirrel tail they brought in.

This case, with many others recently, illustrates popular ignorance about animal and bird pests—and the need for nation-wide control instead of casual local massacres which may be not only ineffective but cruel.

For pests such as rabbits, grey squirrels and starlings are all increasing just when farmers are being urged to grow more food.

They cause enormous damage to crops, sometimes running into many millions of pounds' worth in a year, and if they were not kept down we should get very little food from our farms.

But *how* should they be kept down? There is not enough knowledge and agreement about that.

MAN has created this problem for himself in two ways.

He has removed most of the natural enemies which used to kill the pests. And by farming nearly all of this island, he has laid on an abundant food supply for them.

Rabbits are the most destructive of all. There is sometimes no alternative to wholesale destruction by gassing, trapping and nets.

Trapping and snaring are often denounced as cruel—and with some justice. The Ministry of Agriculture, admitting that the objectors have a case, is experimenting with a new, "humane" trap.

Countrymen often prefer ferreting because of its "sporting" element. Netting is valuable because it yields a maximum of undamaged rabbit carcases for food.

Gassing, the most effective way, is sometimes condemned because the rabbits, as meat, are lost.

But against that complaint must be set the considered opinion of the Ministry's experts:

"A rabbit will make a meal for two or three people; that same rabbit in a year will destroy more food than three people could eat in a week.

"If rabbits can be put on the food market, so much the better, but the first objective must be to destroy them as pests."

GREY squirrels, misleadingly dubbed tree rats, raid corn crops, kill those of the cabbage family, take bulbs and roots, and destroy trees by eating the bark.

So the grey squirrel, despite its beauty and charm, is a proven enemy of agriculture without a good word to be said for it.

There is only one way to keep squirrels down—shooting. And it should, of course, be done by responsible grown-ups, not by ignorant and thoughtless boys.

Among bird pests the starling is moving to top place. It does some good by eating insects, but far more harm by destroying crops of all kinds. The starling is one of the few kinds of bird which can and does eat anything.

Besides these three major pests, farmers must battle against many others, including pigeons, jays, magpies, mice and voles . . . let alone the rats which infest their stores and buildings.

WE have thoroughly upset the balance of nature, and we are paying for it with an unbridled increase of those animals and birds which can adapt themselves to life in a civilized, cultivated country.

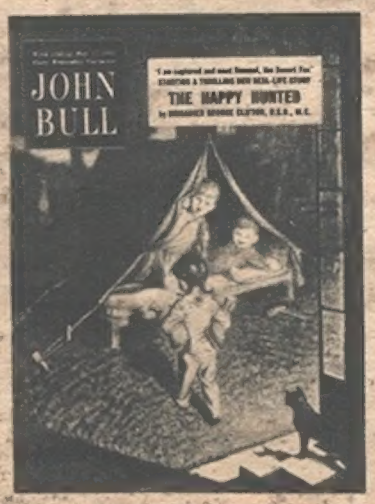
So, if we are to get the extra food we need from the land, there will have to be an organized, scientific war on all the pests.

The time has come for the Ministry of Agriculture to take charge, and to supply men, money and information for this Battle of the Crops.

Piecemeal attacks are useless. Farmer Hodge may kill his rabbits and squirrels—but he is wasting his time unless Farmer Brown down the lane does it, too.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

MOST children love to camp out for the night in the garden. Douglas L. Mays's own children have been no exception. Their favourite spot was on the veranda of his country house in Buckingham. No rugged campers, they often sneaked out armed with hot-water bottles. Mays's daughters, who have inspired many of his Cover Kids paintings, are growing up fast. Madeline, the eldest, is 21, an artist like father.



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FREE SPEECH

The case for mothers keeping a job

HOLDING A PART-TIME JOB need not prevent any woman from being a good mother to her children. Quite the reverse. I work three days a week from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. My children are at school during these hours and I have school holidays off. Unless they heard me talking about my job, they would never know that I had one.

I know that I am a far better mother now that I have an outside interest, and I enjoy my housework more because I have a change from it. Although my husband earns £600 a year, my own salary every month gives me a feeling that no dress allowance ever could. Not every woman on marrying finds absolute fulfilment in house and children, and the dullest women I know are those who are intensely houseproud and fanatically absorbed in their own children.—MRS. J. M., Lancs.

The "Look Out" Cure

DENNIS HOLMAN'S ARTICLE "How Stammerers Become Smooth Talkers" (JOHN BULL, April 26) reminded me of the case of a boy stammerer at a school where I taught. A friend of his would give him a cricket ball and then go to the other end of the garden and say: "Now I am going to turn my back, so shout 'Look out' before you throw the ball at me." It worked. —FRED E. BOLT, 25 Coombe Park, Bath.

Dining Out Of Doors

CAN NOTHING be done to provide us with more outdoor restaurants, where we can eat and drink alfresco during the fine weather, instead of being crammed into stuffy indoor restaurants. Our climate is no worse than that of Holland, Belgium and Northern France, where outdoor cafés are numerous and popular.—JOHN M. KENT, 12 Girdlers Road, London, W.14.

Taking Over From Love

PROHIBITING THOSE UNDER the age of twenty-one from becoming engaged and making engagements last a minimum of two years, as suggested by your correspondent ("Free Speech," April 26), could be carried a stage farther. We could have a Registrar of Engagements, to whom all would have to present their birth certificates before being granted engagement certificates. These would have to be produced two years later before permission would be given to marry. Jewellers could be fined for selling engagement rings to persons under age, and perhaps we could even make it compulsory to apply for a life partner to the State Spouse Bureau, thus doing away altogether with the now apparently old-fashioned and inefficient arrangement called Love.—MISS LILIAN OSTERMAN, 84 Storeton Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire.

. . . We earnestly support the introduction of a law prohibiting marriage until the parties are over twenty-one and have been engaged for two years. We also think that proof of physical and mental fitness should have to be produced. This would prevent scatter-brained people, particularly women, from marrying on such frivolous and fatuous grounds as, "I would like to marry him; he is such a smashing dancer"—recently overheard in a bus. —TWENTY-FIVE MEMBERS OF MEN'S HALL, University College, Leicester.

Thrills Of Kite Flying

MY NIECE IN BERMUDA recently wrote to me describing the colourful kite-flying competitions held there during the Easter holiday. The whole town turned out to watch the children, boys and girls alike, flying their kites, some

Becoming a lost art?

of which were seventy feet long. It seems a pity that we do not have something like that here, and I am wondering whether kite-flying is becoming a lost art in this country.—THOMAS WILSON, 640 Govan Road, Glasgow.

May I Have The Pleasure?

YOUR CORRESPONDENT who wrote ("Free Speech," April 26) on the lost courtesies of dancing should try attending an old-time dance. She would find there all the old charm and grace, including cards in which to book partners, lovely old music, and, above all, the request, "May I have the pleasure . . . ?" before a dance and an escort back to her seat afterwards.—F. J. HAMPTON, 26 Cobham Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.

. . . Funniest invitation to a dance I ever had came from a young lad who said: "Hi ya snake, let's wriggle."—MRS. PAT BUSH, 36 Royston Avenue, Southend-on-Sea.

. . . I overheard an American, approaching a pretty girl sitting alone at a dance, drawl: "Can I borrow your frame in a shuffle, babe?"—R. W. ESSON, 4 Shaftesbury Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire.

Cost Of Being A Farmer

EASY SOLUTIONS TO farming problems usually come from those who know little about the subject. I farm twenty acres, and I am under-stocked. It takes a lifetime to stock and run a farm satisfactorily, and it means the investment of a lot of money. The approximate cost of a 400-acre farm would be £10,000 or £15,000. A herd of fifty milking cows would cost £5,000, and 150 dry or store cattle, including calves, yearlings and stock fit to grade, would be approximately £2,000. Tools, etc., would cost about £2,000—a grand total of £19,000-£24,000. At least three men would have to be employed, with a wage bill of about £800 a year, and a floating capital of £2,000 would be needed to buy fertilizers, cattle foods, etc. I would favour a Government scheme to help men of small means to get started on the land, but good farming comes only from hard work and experience and the most efficient producers are the old-established farmers, whether they have five acres or two thousand. —FARMER, Pembrokeshire.

Driving Without A Test

A FRIEND OF MINE bought a new car. Neither he nor his father could drive, and I offered to act as instructor. But when they applied for provisional licences they found that, because the father had taken out a licence in 1920 (which he had never had occasion to use), he could now be granted a driving licence without any test.—J. G. W., Preston.

Psychic Trivialities

REGINALD M. LESTER'S ARTICLES "Survival After Death" (JOHN BULL, March 22-April 26) showed that his sincerity is unquestionable and his approach uncommonly level-headed. But so much of his evidence hangs on those fragile, intensely personal trivialities which carry a conviction utterly incommunicable. Contact so surely established should, occasionally at least, rise to a higher level. Patient examination of much evidence has only strengthened my feeling of surprise that the departed should bother to come over at all when, uniformly, they have so little on their minds.—J. STURGEON, 24 Lydbrook Road, Middlesbrough.

. . . If it could be shown that, in fact, our consciousness survives the death of the body, what a difference this would make to our actions and moral behaviour. —WILLIAM PAYNE, 16 Gladsmuir Road, London, N.19.

. . . The spiritualist view of the state of survival seems to be "Paradise for all." There is no mention of judgment before God. This will promote the "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy, not conducive to high standards of morality. — DEREK SWANN, 22 St. Alban's Avenue, Gabalfa, Cardiff.

Reginald M. Lester is preparing a further article, dealing with points raised by readers. It will appear in JOHN BULL *shortly.*

Never Too Old To Begin

WHEN MY HUSBAND retired from the Services at fifty, he found his new job very much a bread-and-butter affair. After some difficulty, I persuaded him to start painting. To

everyone's astonishment, he has produced a couple of arresting pictures. He has lost his former tiredness, enjoys his work, and can hardly wait to start on his new hobby when he arrives home. How many other readers have discovered how artificial is the "too old to begin" barrier?—MRS. M. B., London, W.1.

Miss Smart—Mrs. Dowdy

WHY DO NORMALLY SMART girls allow their appearance to deteriorate after marriage? Surely it is not the burden of motherhood or domesticity, because many single girls have to make long journeys to and from work, yet manage to look spruce.—MRS. E. JAMES, 45 The Grove, Gravesend, Kent.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Psychopathic Cyclist learns to wheel right

In cycling cycles, they call Sid the "Trackless Waste." He used to be first string for Wilbury Wheelers — and chewed string at that. "How's yous chequered-flag career?" I jollied him.

"*Finished,*" *snarled Sid.* "*I've been a free wheeler ever since this constipation started. I feel as flat as a punctured tyre.*"

"*Obviously,*" I said. "You've got inner tube trouble."

"*Huh?*" *back-pedalled Sid.*

"It's true," I said, "only this inner tube is in your inside—30 ft. of it. And everything you eat has to go through it. The trouble is that there's nothing for your bowel muscles to grip on in the soft, starchy food we put down nowadays — and they get out of condition."

"*What happens then?*" *asked Sid.*

"A pile-up," I said, "caused by overtaking on the inside. At this point constipation makes you feel like braking, and the colly-wobbles become wheel-wobbles. The only thing for you," I said, "is *bulk.*"

"*No more medicine for me,*" *moaned Sid.*

"Agreed," I said. "You'll get all the *bulk* those muscles need, merely by having Kellogg's All-Bran for breakfast. It's delicious—and it'll make you 'regular.'"

"*Can I bank on it?*" *asked Sid.*

But the next time I saw the old cross-bar—whoosh, that's a cyclone, that was! When he'd finished winning, I took him aside. "What's the secret?" I said. "Rockets?"

"*I don't need 'em,*" *chirruped Sid.* "*I'm fit for a sixty-day cycle race now. That All-Bran you mentioned made me 'regular'—in four days!*"

"A Tour de Force," I said.

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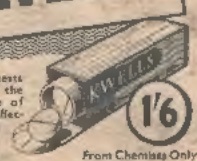

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ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON HORNER

In front, the tractor was churning up a cloud of dust. I took a chance. Unseen by the harassed German driver, I opened the cab door and leaped away

THE HAPPY HUNTED

by Brigadier GEORGE CLIFTON, D.S.O., M.C.

Captured in the Western Desert, Brigadier Clifton made nine attempts to escape. This is the story of his adventures. They began soon after he met Rommel, the Desert Fox

ABOUT 4 A.M. ON SEPTEMBER 5, 1942, the telephone buzzed beside my camp-bed. "George?" said a well-known voice. "Speaking, sir." "Brigadier Robertson has been badly wounded," said General Freyberg. "His men have met trouble and are rather disorganized. Go out and tidy it up—and George!" "Yes, sir?" "Be careful." Neither of us realized at the time that those were the last battle orders that distinctive voice would give me.

I turned out my driver and wireless operator and we drove out in my jeep south from Alam Nayil, expecting to be back for breakfast. Racing against time, to get the situation squared away before sunrise froze movement, we hurtled out over no-man's-land looking for a forward New Zealand company. The thin moonlight was fading as the sun crept up, and it would be full day in ten minutes. Half left, the black blobs of friendly Valentine tanks showed clearly, pinpointed by occasional shell bursts evidently meant for them. Half right, dim khaki-clad figures walked round the raised edge of a slight hollow.

"That must be Henry's company," said Major Ted Walden, whom we had picked up on the way. We swung across, still peering for any sign of Panzers beyond the Valentines. With the last hundred yards to go, Shand, my driver, shouted, "Hell. They're not our blokes!" Quite right. We were rushing towards a dirty big Breda and several Spandaus manned by Axis crews in queer uniform—Italian parachutists.

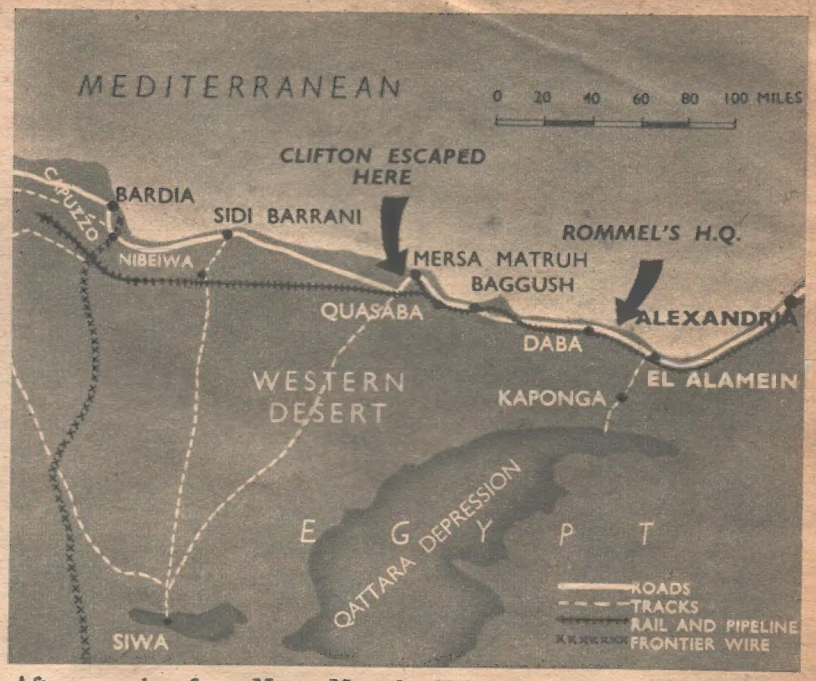
There was no time, short of suicide, to swing away and run for it. Besides, the Valentines might see our jeep and intervene. My red hat looked impressive enough for Italians, so I walked up on to the mound alongside the Breda and tried by inarticulate yet vital pantomime to persuade them to surrender. Pointing

ROMMEL

CLIFTON

"A very brave and likeable man," was Rommel's opinion of Clifton after the two met. But one thing puzzled him. "Why are you New Zealanders fighting?" he asked. "This is Europe's war, not yours." Clifton held up his hand, fingers bunched. "Attack Britain, and you attack us, too. We stand together."

Clifton (in car) captured after his second escape bid. By ill-luck these Germans, out hunting gazelle, spotted him wandering in the open desert



After escaping from Mersa Matruh, Clifton trekked south-eastwards through the Western Desert. He was picked up on the sixth day out

at the Valentines, I said "*Inglesi* tanks," then swept my arm round and added "New Zealandese," ending with shooing motions and "*Surrendo*." The Breda gunners said something and began taking their gun to bits. It looked quite promising. One nudge from the Valentines and we were home for breakfast, with forty Italian guests. But the "*Inglesi* tanks" were intent on potential trouble from the south, and saw nothing. Suddenly a German officer came running over from a slit trench fifty yards away and told my parachutists not to be b.f.s.

That is how I went "into the bag." And what a damned silly way to do it!

Through The Axis Lines

It was daylight as the parachutists marched us four hundred yards south to their headquarters, where we caused terrific chatter and excitement. We were packed, all four of us, into the back seat of a dilapidated baby Fiat car, the one guard, hugging a Beretta tommy-gun, sitting beside the driver. Off we bumped, flat on the springs, through the Axis lines.

Shortly after, we were dumped outside a dug-out built under the rim of a depression, objects of curiosity and some derision to the Italians who wandered aimlessly around. Finally, a bearded Italian general strutted out, preceded by guards and gilded staff. He walked up the slope, studied the desert for five minutes through very nice field glasses—the battle being at least two miles away and quite invisible—then strutted down again. Looking us over contemptuously, he snarled something which meant "Take the scum away!" and went back underground.

His staff officer wanted my binoculars, but I pointed at my red hat and vigorously refused. It worked then, though not at the next stage, which proved to be a headquarters established in our one-time medical centre at Kaponga. Here an Italian intelligence officer, in perfect English, asked questions, to which I replied, of course, by giving number, rank and name only. He then demanded my binoculars as military and not personal equipment. Quite rightly, they had to go, mainly to save the compass which was in the pocket of my shorts.

Ten minutes later everyone got very excited when the news went round that Rommel was arriving. Round the knoll in a cloud of dust came several reconnaissance vehicles, headed by a big open German staff car, with Rommel himself sitting erect in the back seat. He stepped out to a chorus of "Heils," much saluting and heel-clicking, went over and met the Italian full colonel, who was evidently the senior officer there, shook hands with the Italian staff and discussed various battle arrangements. This done, Rommel shook hands all round again and dismissed them. Then, and not until then, he called up the senior German officer, a major. It was obvious the Italians were frightfully pleased with this display of military courtesy, particularly in front of a senior British prisoner. Here was one reason why they fought better for Rommel than for any other German general.

A few minutes later I was called over, and so, for the first time, met this famous commander. Rommel and I had the same build, short, thick-set, though he had a bigger waistline than mine, and obviously was rather sensitive about this. Various people kept buzzing round taking photographs, and I noticed he leaned forward on his toes and raised his chin to counter the slight bulge in front. A very good tip which I follow now, with increasing years and weight!

Here was someone who really radiated personality; full of energy, drive and self-assurance; a strong, determined leader, yet, one also felt, a kindly man and, as I learned later, a fair one, too. Those laughter lines at the corners of his eyes were genuine. Of course, that impression was not automatic, because for a few minutes all my attention was fully occupied with our conversation.

We talked through Major Burckhardt, commander of the paratroops, who spoke perfect English. There was no question then, or at our second meeting, of Rommel asking me for military information. That was not his job. He opened the conversation with a long harangue about the "gangster fighting methods" of the New Zealanders. In the battle at Mingar Qaim we had deliberately bayoneted all their wounded, he said. Obviously extremely annoyed about it, Rommel added: "The Afrika Korps fights hard but fairly, but if you New Zealanders want it rough, we can fight that way, too. If there's any more of it, I shall order immediate and heavy reprisals."

My Reply To Rommel

As I was the nearest New Zealander available for retaliation, this became rather personal. So I said to Burckhardt: "I wish to explain what we know happened during that night attack, when the New Zealanders broke out at Mingar Qaim. Our first attacking wave, advancing silently in the darkness, caught your infantry by surprise. After that leading wave passed, some of your men, lying on the ground, fired their machine-guns or threw bombs at the New Zealanders who had gone through. This action was seen by our supporting companies who followed in a second assaulting line, and they bayoneted or shot everyone, whether lying down or standing up, who did not surrender immediately. The field marshal is a front-line fighter, and will appreciate that, under these conditions at night, men already wounded could be bayoneted, possibly more than once."

Whether influenced by the way I put this across, or whether my story confirmed what they already knew, Rommel answered: "Well, that is reasonable, and could happen in a night attack by infantry."

Leaving the subject of "gangster methods," Rommel next asked: "Why are you New Zealanders fighting? This is a European war, not yours. Are you here for the sport?" Realizing he was serious and really meant this, and never having previously tried to put into words the—to us—self-evident fact that if Britain fought then we fought, too, I held up my hand with the fingers together, and said: "We stand together. If you attack Britain, you attack New Zealand and Australia and Canada, too. The British Commonwealth fights together."

Rommel then asked if I had any request to make. "Yes, Field Marshal," I answered. "If

A LIFE OF ADVENTURE

"BRIGADIER CLIFTON was cut out for a life of adventure," says General Lord Freyberg, V.C., New Zealand's Governor-General. "I know of nobody who, by nature, was less suited to be a prisoner. An undaunted soldier, he reacted as was to be expected."

Lord Freyberg, V.C.

To his chagrin, George Herbert Clifton was too young to see active service in the first World War. But soon after, as a regular New Zealand officer, he fought on the N.W. Frontier of India, and in 1920 won an M.C. When the second World War came, he determined not to miss the fighting, and in the campaigns in Greece and Libya he won three D.S.O.s Now fifty-three, he expects to retire soon and work on his sheep station.

Gordon Horner

GORDON HORNER, whose paintings illustrate *The Happy Hunted*, also fought in Libya and was a p.o.w. His sketches of desert battles and prison life are published in his book *For You The War Is Over*. A professional artist, he studied at Leeds College of Art. He is thirty-seven, married, and lives in London.

Brigadier Clifton (left) talks through Major Burckhardt, German interpreter, to Rommel (centre). This photograph was taken two hours after Clifton was made prisoner. "I noticed," Clifton writes, "that Rommel would lean forward when photographed, raising his chin to counter the bulge of his waistline"

I am to be a prisoner of war, I would much prefer to be in German hands than Italian. Could you send me to Germany?"

"I shall do my best," replied Rommel, and wishing me good luck, he climbed into the car, and with a repeat chorus of "Heils," saluting and heel-clicking, drove off eastward to the battle.

We waited with Major Burckhardt until nearly midday, then our transport rolled up, in the shape of a battered Ford twin-rear-tyred truck, which we knew from bitter experience was an unmitigated nuisance on desert going. Piled in the back were five paratroop sergeants, very happy and boisterous because they were off for seven days' home leave in Germany. I climbed into the dusty cab, and so did the young *oberleutnant*, whose fiancée (he had told me) had been an English lass.

Bogged In The Sand

Our poor old Ford grunted up the slope on to the Kaponga rim and reached the so-called track running north. Always bad, it had been reduced by the Axis traffic to an appalling mess, through which we laboured heavily. Eventually we reached the two-mile-wide belt of very soft sand-drift short of the railway. The Ford just settled down and refused completely. Then an unusually heavy cloud of dust bore down on us, and as the dust drifted clear, half a dozen enormous vehicles emerged: huge tracked tractors, three of them towing equally big 88-millimetre guns with effortless ease.

Using the magic name of Rommel, the *oberleutnant* borrowed a mechanized elephant to haul us as far as the railway; and he climbed up on the tractor, allegedly to guide the driver, but really and very sensibly to miss the dust. Towing behind the brute was frightful. Its tracks churned up so much sand that the driver and I, alone in the cab, could see nothing ahead, and breathing was quite difficult. Then I realized he was completely engrossed trying to steer our bucking Ford on its wild, semi-submerged course. The dust had a slow drift away—on my side. There were definite possibilities. Better check up first through the back window of the cab. In the haze I could see only misshapen figures wrapped in various garments, vainly attempting to keep the desert out.

My Luck Was Out

Quietly pushing open the cab door, and unseen by the harassed driver, I fell into a foot of yellow flour, got up at once and floundered away in the drifting dust cloud. But my luck was out. Trying to get above the dust, one of the paratroopers was perched on top of the cab, and facing backwards. He saw my shadowy figure disappearing through the murk, dragged out a Luger and fired the whole magazine. This accelerated my departure, but also effectively gave the alarm. Long before I had ploughed through six hundred yards of desert track, the *oberleutnant* and two others, armed with rifles, were hot on my tracks.

Three hundred yards start did help, although the rifle bullets screamed past much too frequently. Fortunately, they were bad shots. But the lad with the Luger had other ideas and, getting clear of the line of fire, he started to run me down. We coursed for two miles, across flat desert of soft sand or pebble patches and thin camel thorn high enough to hide a goat. There was no cover other than that, and no lucky break to help me. When I crashed for the third and last time, completely exhausted, the Luger was fifty yards behind and coming on strongly.

When the others panted up, mad with rage, it was a near thing whether they shot me out of hand. Probably my rank saved me. Apart from a few kicks and much abuse, they took no stronger action. Arriving back at the truck, however, the *oberleutnant* promised to shoot two of the others if I made a further attempt to escape, and that was that.

Three miles west of Sidi Abd el Rahman we turned north down an ordinary rough track to the Mediterranean. Here is the least dusty and therefore most habitable stretch of seafront between Alexandria and Mersa Matruh. And Rommel's own headquarters enjoyed every yard of it. Tucked away carefully along the limestone bank, which fringed the shelving beach, were caravans, dug-in offices and bivouacs, all carefully camouflaged. Vehicles evidently parked elsewhere, because our Ford dumped us and drove on. We were taken to an office and caravan, which proved to be Intelligence.

The Marshal's Private Airfield

Here I met a pleasant-faced young staff officer named Solling, who spoke English well. While waiting for interrogation, he pointed out Rommel's personal caravan, stowed inconspicuously away only fifty yards from the gentle surf. Not one hundred yards inland from his door was a patch of smooth salt pan. Solling pointed to this salt pan and said: "That is the field marshal's private airfield." I must have looked incredulous, because he explained: "Every morning the field marshal takes off at dawn from that strip in his Fieseler-Storch, and flies very low, protected, of course, by fighters, down south to an area where you built defences. There's a landing strip there, and his reconnaissance vehicles are ready waiting. When he returns from the forward battle, his Storch flies back here in five minutes, over the really bad desert, and he can enjoy a quiet swim before starting more work. And he works like the devil," added Solling with a grin.

Ted Walden and I spent the night in a small tent, and all next day lying on the beach, or swimming, with a sentry very much on guard. About mid-afternoon on the following day we

Continued on page 21

"*Ahé, Rodero!*" The bull skidded, turning its head in the direction of the small, familiar voice

A BULL FOR JOSÉ

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT TIGNER

To the boy who bred him he was the finest fighting bull of all time. Only one man was worthy of such an animal

ON AN AFTERNOON of a day in July, two horsemen were riding across the Ruhio pastures thirty miles from Jerez, on the Andalusian plain. The *ganaderia,* or bull ranch, of Don Gabriel Ruhio is not among the biggest in Spain, but what it lacks in size it makes up in quality. The beasts its ancient blood produces are hardly as handsome as those of Camara, or as heavy as the rushing Murube, but they are almost invariably strong, active and very brave—qualities which allow even a mediocre matador to behave with dignity and skill.

It was to supervise the despatch of six bulls, which had been selected the day before for an important fight in Madrid, that the two horsemen were riding through the heat at an hour when all Christians were taking their siestas.

The younger of the pair, José Narros, his hand shading his eyes, gazed steadily at the plain. It stretched away, flat and featureless, to the thin blue line of the sierras. Only a few shadeless trees, sticking up like broken masts, broke the surface of the yellow, calcined sea of grass. Suddenly he pointed and kicked his horse into a trot; he had seen the bulls. Still half a mile away, they might have been black rocks in the sun. Some were lying down, others were grazing; all raised their heads as the horses approached. It was a moment which José never experienced without emotion.

For José, only three beings existed in the world: Salvador Narros, Miguel Lafita—and Rodero. The first was his father, who rode by his side; the second was a matador; the third was a bull. Each was superlative. It was perfectly obvious that of all the *vaqueros* who had ever tended bulls, Salvador Narros was the most inspired, the most profoundly instructed in their ways. It was equally manifest that before Miguel Lafita appeared even the greatest bullfighters of the past had been incompetent poltroons. As for Rodero, no one who had not

Lafita began to mop himself. Then he saw the boy, staring at him intently

seen him could possibly imagine what a fighting bull might be; Rodero was simply the noblest, most beautiful, greatest-hearted bull that had ever been bred. These were self-evident truths to José, and he was prepared to knock down any boy in Spain that doubted them.

José Narros was fourteen, and the greater part of his waking hours had been spent with bulls. The first thing he ever remembered seeing was a bull when, a small child clinging to the pommel of his father's saddle, he had been taken out to visit the pastures. Because he meant to be a matador, he hoped that the last thing he would see might be a bull also. He had expressed this hope to his mother and had received, as reward, a sign of the cross and two stinging slaps on the ear. His father took José's ambition more seriously. In all his experience, Salvador Narros could hardly remember one or two human beings who "felt" bulls so infallibly as did his son. The boy could "talk" to them with the confidence of the oldest *vaquero*; he showed a perfect knowledge of their habits and instincts; had he been allowed, he would have played with them as fearlessly as other children play with dogs. There was one bull, indeed, which he treated almost as a pet.

José's attachment to the bull Rodero was famous in places as far away as Cordoba and Seville. Rodero had been a weak calf, so gawky and ailing that Salvador Narros had decided to get rid of it as unworthy of the Ruhio herd. But José had pleaded for it and, more to humour the boy than to save the animal's life, his father had let him have his way.

For months José had fed Rodero with a bottle. He had changed its straw, had slept sometimes for nights on end in its stall. The calf had grown strong. The drooping neck was raised, crested with muscle, the pinched front legs widened across a deep chest, the hunched back subsided to a short, supple curve coupled to nervous, powerful flanks. Before he was three years old, Rodero had become one of the finest young bulls on the Ruhio ranch.

In the *tientas*, the tests for courage, José had watched, with a strange mixture of fear and pride, his favourite prove himself to be the stoutest of his age. And when the tests were over, it was he who had helped to throw the young bull and mark the right quarter with the Ruhio brand, the design of crossed swords above an R, which proclaimed to all that Rodero was a fighting bull, fit to play his part in the ring.

That had been two years before. Now, at four years old, Rodero's life in the paddocks was coming to an end. It was to see the bull once more, before he was put in the wagon for Madrid, that José had ridden out with his father. The boy had always known that Rodero must die; he was proud to know that he had been selected for one of the most important *corridas* of the year. He was certain that he would die bravely; all that he prayed for now was that luck would watch over him when the three matadors drew lots for the bulls, and that it would be Miguel Lafita who would face Rodero in the arena. Only Lafita was worthy to kill the greatest bull in Spain. . . .

The six animals selected had been detached from the herd. They stood together in a wooden-fenced enclosure. José jumped from his horse and slipped between the bars of the corral.

"Eh, *chico*, eh! Be careful," his father growled.

The boy stood still and called in a thin voice: "Rodero! *Ahé*, Rodero!" and one of the bulls, his head raised, his ears pricked below the spreading horns, trotted up to the extended hand. He was black, massive and glistening in the sun. For a moment he stood, looking high into the air, then the head went down and José paddled his fingers in the stiff curls between the horns. He took a step forward past the swelling shoulder and let his hand slip up the bristled neck to caress the *cruz*, the point on the apex of the arching withers where the thin blade of sword would enter. Thus, for a minute, bull and boy stood together. Then Rodero stirred gently and José moved away.

When, mounted once more, he looked back at the corral. He saw that Rodero had raised his head again. The bull still looked towards him: the horns were like a black hawk's wings against the ash-coloured sky. Salvador Narros, as they rode back to the ranch, had never known his son to be so silent. . . .

MIGUEL LAFITA, waiting for his first bull of the afternoon, took a gulp from the bottle, rinsed his mouth and spat the water out. He took the towel tendered to him and wiped his face. His eyes were on the figure thirty yards away on the red sand, the man in green and silver who raised his arms again and again to the shouting stands.

"Arruza! Arruza!" The short, harsh word sounded like the excited breathing of the crowd.

The man in green and silver saluted once more, then walked back smiling to the *burladero*, the narrow escape gap in the barrier where the matadors and their men were standing. Lafita grinned at him as he squeezed past. He did not grudge the Mexican his triumph. He was too fine a matador not to know that Carlos Arruza had just completed the *faena* of a lifetime, a display in which every facet of the bullfighter's art had shone purely in the flame of a great bull's courage. The bull! All depended on the bull. A man's integrity and skill, his courage, his income and his life. . . .

The crowd was settling down. Red-shirted men ran about the ring, smoothing the sand with long wooden rakes. Behind the barrier, the *peons* of Lafita's team were unfurling their capes while, high in the gallery above, the trumpeters were getting ready.

Lafita fixed his black toque more firmly on his head. "Which is it now?"

"*El negro azabache*, the big, jet black one." It was a thin man in shirt sleeves who spoke—Marcial Delgado, the matador's sword handler and familiar, who never left his side. Delgado knew bulls as some men know women or cards, with a passionate, professional detachment.

"I remember." Lafita had seen the bulls the morning before. They had been impressive, but even in that company one had stood out: a towering beast whose animal dignity and savage poise had shamed the squalid concrete courtyard in which it was confined. The draw had allotted it to Lafita. He said now to Delgado: "If he's only half as brave as he looks I'll be content."

DELGADO said nothing; he had seen too many bulls belie their appearance to base any hopes on corral inspection. Still, he reflected, these were Ruhios and Arruza's bull had been incontestably brave. He began rolling a cigarette with nervous fingers; this was always the worst moment for him.

The men sweeping the ring had run back to the shelter of the barrier; the immense circle of sand lay empty. Tacitly, as if an overture had ended, the crowd crouched into silence. Then the trumpets throbbed and fifteen thousand eyes turned to the red gates of the *toril*. They opened slowly and Rodero stepped stiffly out into the sun.

It blinded him. For a moment he stood still, the black pupil in a huge red eye, then the head went up proudly and he trotted forward, his horns fretting the air. He reached the centre and a cape flapped briefly at the barrier; Rodero charged. His horns thumped the smooth wood; another flick of scarlet turned him in his tracks. He charged again, and again the target vanished. Now, to the right, a man appeared, a man trailing something bright and moving, something that Rodero could not touch, that swayed and curled from reach as the horns wrenched at it in brutal, glittering arcs.

Lafita watched him from the barrier, noting the straight lunge of the horns, the strong, sound legs which brought the huge body round to the fluttering cape in almost its own length. He saw no cunning and no meanness, he saw a bull that went to the lure cleanly and instantly, a bull with which a man could work undemeaned. When the second *peon* had run Rodero twice, Lafita had seen enough. He made a sign to stop and walked into the ring.

"He's brave," said Delgado thankfully, as he made way for him. And "he's brave" the crowd echoed deeply. "*Brava, brava!*" The word furled out like a cape, and with it the sun grew brighter, the colours were reconciled. All things suddenly took significance and leapt together, the myth emerged in flesh and time. . . .

Lafita stood still, close to the barrier, in profile to the centre of the ring. Indolently, he

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A girl worker at Ditton measures carbon dioxide "exhaled" by apples in a cold room. Ronald Clark's first article on the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research appeared in John Bull last week

Super-chefs of the laboratory

by RONALD CLARK

Why do pigs killed on foggy days provide better bacon? The scientists who make food more tasty soon learned the answer

THERE ARE TWO STORIES which the men and women of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Britain's "let - science - help - industry" organization, like to tell about their boss, sixty-year-old Sir Ben Lockspeiser.

Shortly after the end of the war, when he was an air research adviser to the Ministry of Supply, he was asked to investigate supersonic flight. At least a few experimental aircraft then built could, it was felt, be pushed to break through the barrier of sound into the unknown.

Sir Ben objected. "I haven't the heart to ask pilots to attempt flight beyond the speed of sound," he said. "We must do it first with robots." And, as a result, a series of experiments with mechanically-flown planes was held.

Then there was the incident at the Schoolboys' Exhibition, when Ministry officials learned that Sir Ben was visiting it. He was finally found explaining to a group of admiring schoolboys just how a jet engine worked—and explaining it so simply that all could understand.

Both stories illustrate the same comprehension of the human mind, the same desire to adapt science for man rather than to alter man to fit science—a valuable quality in a £3,500-a-year scientist whose "on-the-ground" problems include improving the quality of the nation's food, solving raw material shortages, and helping to reduce road accidents.

The oldest of the department's many sections is the Geological Survey, started in the 1830's and now concentrating on such problems as Britain's water supply and the siting of new towns. Apart from the National Physical Laboratory, started at the turn of the century, all the other varied "stations" have been started by the department itself. They range from the Building Research Station at Watford, at present engaged on finding how best to sound-insulate flats, to the Fuel Research Station at Greenwich, which is busy solving the problem (among many others) of "smog," that grey-black blanket that descends on Britain's industrial towns.

Sir Ben cannot visit the thirty-odd laboratories under his control with any regularity. Yet his constant interest in the work of the Food Investigation Board shows how well he knows the effect that the work of his department has on everyday life. During the last few years the Board has helped to solve such problems as how to cook a kipper and how to produce, from special gas-storage chambers, rosy-cheeked English apples which have been picked for more than six months.

The work of the Board is centred on a pleasant red-brick building tucked away in the heart of Cambridge, and almost surrounded by ancient University buildings. Only a few steps from the headquarters itself is the Low Temperature Research Station, whose impressive cold store chambers are used for investigating such queer problems as "the prevention of drip in frozen meat"—a problem whose solution will help to give more tender beef.

Scientific Soup Recipe

It was at Cambridge that the "perfect" dried soup was worked out. The problem was to produce the most nutritious and easily-made soup powder. After weeks of work, the experts found that the best recipe was 35 parts by weight of dried ground mutton, 2 parts of potato fat mixture, 34 parts of dried potato, 10 parts of dried carrots, 4 parts of dried cabbage, 9 parts of full fat soya flour, 1.6 parts of dried yeast extract, 1 part of onion powder and 0.1 and 4 parts of pepper and salt respectively.

It is at Cambridge, too, that the story is told of the pigs on the foggy morning. "One winter," say the experts, "it was found that pigs brought to the slaughter-house on foggy mornings provided much better bacon than those killed on other mornings.

"There seemed no reason at all for this; the pigs killed were all of the same age and quality, and they were killed under identical conditions. Then someone had an idea; they tested it out and proved it to be right. The answer was far more simple than anyone had expected: on foggy mornings the lorry carrying the pigs to the slaughter-house went more slowly, and the pigs were not jolted up and down so much as on other mornings. This had an important effect on their blood-stream—and the result was better bacon."

The Cambridge Station is merely one of the food laboratories under Sir Ben's control. Others have helped to produce such things as dehydrated beer. At the Torry Research Station, a collection of shacks on a promontory in the middle of Aberdeen ("with a tame trawler tied on to the door-knob for real at-sea work"), there is the round-the-year work on such complex problems as storing fish at sea, and how best to freeze and pack them when they have been landed. And at the Ditton Laboratory, set deep among the Kentish orchards at East Malling, there is constant work on the long-term storage of fruit and vegetables.

Perhaps some of the most unexpected work on food now going on under Sir Ben's control is that at Ditton, where they are now coping with a "problem child."

"This problem child," says Dr. J. C. Fidler, one of the Principal Scientific Officers at the laboratory, "is the Bristol Cross pear. It's father was a William, and its mother was a Conference. Both parents can be stored in carbon dioxide for months on end, and produced rich and ripe at the end of it. The Bristol Cross, a new kind of pear produced by

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Holding the lantern up high, the rector peered at the bare patch of wall where the clock should have been hanging. "Well, I'm blessed!" he said

The clock that walked

by ***PAULINE CLARKE***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

The rector swore he hadn't sold it—and yet it had gone, without trace, without reason. Overnight, the village had a juicy scandal

WE HAD LIVED IN THE VILLAGE of Old Blinkington two or three years before I stumbled upon the story I tell here, which had happened over thirty years earlier. When I began to inquire about the story one day in the local inn, I was lucky enough to find several people who remembered it clearly, who could reconstruct it with the help, I suspect, of active imaginations, in so much detail that I began to see it all taking place before my eyes as if it had happened yesterday. . . .

"And the clock, Rector? I suppose it has gone to be cleaned, though I don't remember the question being discussed at the last meeting."

Mrs. Cross, most faithful of the rector's parishioners, spoke as if aggrieved at the end of the meeting of the parochial church council.

"Clock!" said the rector, sensing the atmosphere. "What clock?"

"Why, the clock we always call the grandmother clock. There's only one clock in the church that I know of, Rector," replied Mrs. Cross, who would not have the rector thus evading the question.

"It was I who mentioned it to Mrs. Cross, Rector," began Miss Pipe, quick to claim that she had been the first to discover it. "To tell you the truth, I don't know that I should have realized it, had I not gone up to empty the Church Funds Box which, as you know, is near the west door on the wall next to the clock. And the clock was not there."

"Clock! Not there!" said the rector again, and he blushed with surprise and annoyance. "I don't know what you mean. It was there last time I was in the church, which was after the early service this morning."

"Ah! But was it, Rector? Was it? It is sadly true how used we get to things which are

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Crime pays—for P.c.49 and Alan Stranks

by WILFRED GREATOREX

Creator of radio's most famous policeman, Stranks—"brilliant but unpunctual"—earns more than most chief constables

Stranks and his wife, Verna, at work on a script at home. He finds that he cannot work without her

Seeking atmosphere, Stranks gets two real-life policemen to arrest him "to see what it's like"

NOT LONG AGO, POLICE investigating the case of a woman found strangled in a London canal tunnel were told of a man who, only the day before, had been asking bargees about the likeliest place to dump a body.

The informant gave a thorough description of the inquisitive stranger: in early middle-age, he had greying hair thick at the temples, a Ronald Colman moustache, a scar branching from his left eye, and he was wearing a blazer with chromium buttons.

To at least one Metropolitan Police inspector the details were familiar. He telephoned a flat in Chelsea and confirmed his worst suspicions. Not for the first time, Alan Stranks, breezy, temperamental creator of P.c. 49 and a hundred or so lesser police and underworld characters, had anticipated real-life crime in his search for authentic atmosphere.

Once, he handed in two scripts—"The Case Of The Tenth Green," a golf-course murder, and "The Case Of The Twelfth Man," a museum-robbery—less than twenty-four hours before the Press reported the murder of a girl on a ninth green and the theft of an Inigo Jones statue from the Victoria and Albert Museum. On another occasion he wrote a *P.c. 49* episode about a smuggler who transported industrial diamonds by coating them with peameal and feeding them to cross-Channel pigeons. "It seemed unlikely enough," recalls Stranks, "but Scotland Yard got in touch with me after the broadcast and said they were working on just such a case."

To date, Alan Stranks has thought up nearly ninety *P.c. 49* stories, most of them with an ingenious crime or twist. He has also, since 1947, turned out three film scenarios and a 60,000-word book about the same character; created "Flint of the Flying Squad" as a radio and strip-cartoon hero, and written four radio thrillers.

Endings Always Happy

"But for the grace of God in giving him writing ability," quipped a Scotland Yard man recently, "there's no knowing what trouble 'Stranky' would have given us." Stranks good-humouredly shrugs off all such taunts about sublimated criminal tendencies. "I'm always on the side of the law," he says, "and nobody's accused me of furthering juvenile delinquency—yet."

The plots vary, but the Stranks formula remains the same: the heroes are policemen, criminals invariably get it in the neck, and the endings are all happy ones. "Crime pays," Stranks once wisecracked, "but only for the publisher, the actors and me." His yearly earnings have recently been adding up to five figures, and broadcasting royalties from *P.c. 49* alone are greater than the salaries of most chief constables. Since it began on the Light Programme four years ago, *P.c. 49* has acquired a global following through repeats on the Home, General Overseas and Transcription Services of the B.B.C. According to the Corporation's Audience Research Department, it has a home audience of 12,000,000 listeners, of whose influence Stranks is often made painfully aware.

On such matters as police procedure, underworld jargon and criminals' methods they are particularly critical. "It only needs a slight slip and they're on to me," he says. Once he made a crook use the phrase, "I'll have a look." Stranks says, "If I was told once I was told three hundred times that such a Cockney character would have said, 'I'll have a butcher's.'" Now, to get things right, Stranks spends many of his evenings in a riverside pub "among the Cockneys in the spit-and-sawdust." His slang has improved considerably.

Wanted Transfer To "Q"

Many policemen write to him; so do their wives, some of whom, according to Alan, "imagine they're married to real-life '49s." One ambitious constable on a Devonshire beat wrote in all seriousness asking Stranks to use whatever influence he had with the Metropolitan Police authorities to get him a transfer to "Q" Division—"so that I can work with P.c. 49." Stranks sent an immediate, realistic reply, in which he said that there was really no "49," and no "Q" Division. He was no less coldly explicit when a potential policeman in Birmingham, indignantly disillusioned, sent a letter saying he was changing his mind about joining the Force because, if a man like "49" couldn't get promotion, what chance did he stand?

Stranks is determined, however, not to promote the character who has had so much success on the beat in unravelling crimes varying from forgery and blackmail to gangsterism and murder. "It would be like making Billy Bunter grow up," he once said.

He has been less conservative about the private life of P.c. Archibald Berkeley-Willoughby, otherwise "49." A few weeks ago, he married him off to Joan Carr, the fiancée who has been helping him. "People were getting annoyed at the long courtship," explained Stranks at the time. "But what clinched it was when I got a letter from an old lady saying that Archie was spending too much time at Joan's flat."

At forty-seven, Stranks is far from played out of ideas. "He has a bottom drawer full," says Verna, his wife, "and worries whether he will ever get round to writing them." For years, Stranks has wakened up during the night with new plots. He used to get out of bed and put them down on paper.

One night, some months back, Verna awoke at 3 a.m. and heard him telling a story. He had installed a tape-recording machine by the side

A dramatic moment in a *P.c. 49* episode. The actors, from left, are Ferdy Mayne, Brian Reece (*P.c. 49*), Michael Logan and Cecile Chevreau (Joan Carr)

of the bed. Now, when he has turns of creative insomnia, he mumbles ideas into it

Even the most innocent situations yield story plots, which duly reach Vernon Harris, the producer, as completed half-hour scripts "Seven out of ten," declares Harris, "are devilishly ingenious"

One teatime recently, Stranks decided that he and Verna ought to have a night out They went to a show, but Alan was fidgety from the start. "I could tell," Verna relates, "that he'd be working as soon as we got back." As they left the theatre, he bought some grapes from a barrowboy standing in the rain. To serve Stranks, the youth turned back a large tarpaulin covering the fruit

Begins With The Title

Half an hour afterwards, Stranks started to dictate a new *P.c. 49* to Verna. As usual he began with the title. "The Case Of The Shivering Spiv," he said. It was about a barrowboy who carried a body across London from the scene of the crime under a tarpaulin on his barrow. By four o'clock in the morning it was finished "the quickest I've ever written," says Stranks. Mostly, he spends eight or ten hours on each script, though the idea may have been taking shape for weeks.

During bad spells, he has been known to work the clock round on one episode, chain-smoking all the time (he once went through 200 cigarettes in a day) and getting increasingly bad-tempered On such occasions, he admits, he is "intolerant, ill-mannered and hysterical"

Verna throws in suggestions which are heartily scorned and then quietly incorporated a few minutes later. Stranks will not work without her Once, when she had to be away for a few days, he did not produce a line. On her return, they worked all through four consecutive nights on scripts. Alan insists that he can get more work done on night-shift. And once he has started an episode he will not go to bed until it is completed. During the day, to reduce distractions, he plugs out his detachable telephones, a habit that annoys some of his friends and has upset the B.B.C more than once.

Harris, and others in the know, gets the porter at the block of flats where Stranks lives to go up to the sixth floor and slip a note under his door Even this is not foolproof, however, and there was once a nerve racking few minutes for a B B C producer when a serious problem arose at the last minute over one of Stranks's scripts The writer had hibernated. "Those moments when the porter was taking the message were like an eternity," said a member of the cast "Nobody could be sure when—or even whether—Alan would come out. In the end he did"

As a scriptwriter, Stranks was once described as "brilliant, accurate and unpunctual" Says Harris. "I rarely get a script on time, but when it does come it's a model I've tried everything to cure him of his unpunctuality. I've pleaded I've raved. It makes no difference, and I don't think it ever will."

Before he went on holiday last summer, Stranks promised an extra *P.c. 49* episode in advance When Harris telephoned on the appointed day it was not written. Twenty-four hours later, Alan appeared with all but the last five pages, which he promised to deliver the same night They did not arrive

Early the following week they were still missing "Nobody, not even the porter," says Harris, "knew where Alan had gone. Eventually we traced him through a hire-car firm to Cromer." It turned out that Stranks had given the pages to a taxi-driver to hand in at the B B.C., but the man had pocketed the five-shilling tip and overlooked his part of the bargain

There was also the time when Stranks went to Cornwall for two months. "It was a night mare," Harris recalls. Scripts arrived by post, train and taxi, and via a variety of friends and emissaries.

Wrote Wartime Song Hit

At that time, the writer was also working on some of the 200 song lyrics he has had published. One of his earlier pieces, "There'll Come Another Day," became a wartime hit and kept the Stranks family during a lean spell

Born in Melbourne in 1904, Alan Stranks was a milk roundsman when, at fifteen, he had his first short story published. "The moment I heard they'd paid me twelve guineas," he remembers, "I abandoned my cart."

After several years on newspapers, he went into commercial radio In 1933 he and Verna —they had been married a year before—came to England When war broke out they prepared to return to Melbourne, but Alan had a last-minute change of mind. "It looks as if we're running away," he said. They stayed

Without success, Alan tried to write for the B B.C. He had seven scripts rejected Then, one afternoon, there was a message to say that a Stranks play had been accepted—but it was one of Verna's. A week later came Alan's first success, but at less money than Verna was being paid. He was hurt by this turn of events. "I never spoke to Verna for a week after that," he reflects. "It really was a blow."

One of the earlier rejected pieces was a modest playlet, "The Case Of The Drunken Sailor," which introduced P.c. 49. It was turned down flat by one producer, but was later considered by another When the consideration had lasted eighteen months, Stranks angrily retrieved his script, which was mentioned a few weeks afterwards to Vernon Harris, a variety producer He asked to see it

Six Scripts Were Ordered

Much to Stranks's astonishment, Harris was enthusiastic. "Do you think you can write six of these?" he demanded. Stranks thought he might. Since then, the adventures of P.c 49 have been tumbling from his lips almost as fast as Verna can take them down

Those who work with Stranks find that script or business conferences soon become monologues "You're lucky if you get away with no more than a blinding headache," says an acquaintance "His mind flies around like a pinwheel" Now, Alan Stranks wants to write a documentary feature about faith "But everybody seems scared of a denominational rumpus," he shrugs. "I don't think the B B C. will let me do it And if they won't I can't see who will."

Among a group of friends recently, he said "The gilded tin-can has been tied to my tail. It looks as if I must live between two policemen for the rest of my days." THE END

They do it with mirrors

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

Carrie Louise was unaware of danger; the chocolates were a happy surprise. Miss Marple was just in time

INSPECTOR CURRY HAD COME TO Stonygates, a country house turned into a college for delinquents, to investigate a murder. The dead man was Christian Gulbrandsen, an American and a trustee of the Gulbrandsen funds upon which the college depended. Gulbrandsen had been shot as he typed a letter in his room; but a curious incident had distracted the attention of the household from the shot that killed him.

Lewis Serrocold—who ran the college—and the family were in the great hall after dinner when a young psychopathic case called Edgar Lawson theatrically accused him of being his father. Knowing Lawson's father complex, Serrocold managed to coax him into his study. It was while this hysterical scene was being played out—with the accompaniment of two wild shots from the pistol Lawson had somehow managed to acquire—that Christian Gulbrandsen was murdered in his room.

The motive for the murder seemed to be that Gulbrandsen had discovered that Serrocold's wife, Carrie Louise, was being poisoned. He had been setting the facts down in a letter when he was shot. Serrocold, who said Gulbrandsen hadn't given him details, informed Inspector Curry.

Curry began to question the household. It was a large one, for in addition to the 200 delinquents there were the children and stepchildren of Carrie Louise's two previous marriages—Mildred Strete, her vinegary, widowed daughter; Gina Hudd, her exotic, half-Italian granddaughter and her sullen, ex-G.I. husband, Wally; and Alex and Stephen Restarick, stepsons of her second marriage. There was also, as Curry soon found, Miss Jane Marple, a guest in the house.

Curry was not deceived by Miss Marple's dithery manner; he knew her as a surprisingly acute amateur sleuth. It was Miss Marple who uncovered the fact that almost everyone in the house benefited under Carrie Louise's will. It was Miss Marple, too, who first observed that both the Restarick brothers were in love with Gina—though Gina herself seemed anxious to cover up for her husband, who was absent from the hall at the time of the murder.

Two other significant facts emerged from the morning's questioning: Mildred Strete had a miser's passion for money; and Wally Hudd was being built up by some of the family as a first-class suspect.

PART 4

Curry Finds The Gun

How very difficult, Inspector Curry thought, to get a true estimate of someone from what other people said. Edgar Lawson had been described by a good many different people that morning, but looking at him now, Curry's own impressions were almost ludicrously different.

Edgar did not impress him as "queer" or "dangerous," or "arrogant," or even as "abnormal." He seemed a very ordinary young man, very much cast down and in a state of humility approaching that of Uriah Heep's. He looked young and slightly common and rather pathetic.

He was only too anxious to talk and to apologize.

"I know I've done very wrong. I don't know what came over me—really I don't. Making that scene and kicking up such a row. And actually shooting off a pistol. At Mr. Serrocold, too, who's been so good to me, and so patient, too."

He twisted his hands nervously. They were rather pathetic hands, with bony wrists.

"If I've got to be had up for it, I'll come with you at once. I deserve it. I'll plead guilty."

"No charge has been made against you," said Inspector Curry crisply. "So we've no evidence on which to act. According to Mr. Serrocold, letting off the pistol was an accident."

"That's because he's so good. There never was a man as good as Mr. Serrocold! He's done everything for me. And I go and repay him by acting like this."

"What made you act as you did?"

Edgar looked embarrassed. "I made a fool of myself."

Inspector Curry said dryly: "So it seems. You told Mr. Serrocold in the presence of witnesses that you had discovered that he was your father. Was that true?"

"No, it wasn't."

"What put that idea into your head? Did someone suggest it to you?"

EDGAR jerked uncomfortably. "It's difficult to explain," he said. "I don't really know where to begin."

Inspector Curry looked at him thoughtfully: "Suppose you try. *We* don't want to make things hard for you."

"Well, you see, I had rather a hard time of it as a kid. The other boys jeered at me, because I hadn't got a father. Said I was a little bastard—which I was, of course. Mum was usually drunk and she had men coming in all the time. My father was a foreign seaman, I believe. The house was always filthy. It was like hell. And then I got to thinking suppose my dad had been not just some foreign sailor, but someone important. Suppose I was really the rightful heir to something grand and wonderful. . . . And then I went to a new school and I tried it on once or twice, hinting things. Said

Carrie Louise read out the note she

my father was really an admiral in the Navy. I got to believing it myself. I didn't feel so bad then."

He paused and then went on. "And then—later—I thought up some other ideas. I used to stay at hotels and told a lot of silly stories about being a fighter-pilot—or about being in Military Intelligence. I got all sort of mixed up. I didn't seem able to stop telling lies. I didn't want to be dishonest, but I just couldn't help it. Mr. Serrocold and Dr. Maverick will tell you—they've got all the stuff about it."

Inspector Curry nodded. He had already studied Edgar's case history and his police record.

"Mr. Serrocold got me clear in the end and brought me down here. He said he needed a secretary to help him—and I did help him! I really did. Only the others laughed at me. They were always laughing at me."

"What others? Mrs. Serrocold?"

"No, not Mrs. Serrocold. She's a lady—she's always gentle and kind. But Gina treated me like dirt. And Stephen Restarick. And Mrs. Strete looked down on me for not being a gentleman. So did Miss Bellever—and what's she? She's a paid companion, isn't she?"

Curry noted the signs of rising excitement.

"So you didn't find them very sympathetic?"

Edgar said passionately: "It was because of

had found in the box. She was about to try one of the chocolates when Miss Marple jumped up and intervened. "Wait a moment, Carrie Louise," she said

me being a bastard. If I'd had a proper father they wouldn't have gone on like that."

"So you laid claim to various famous fathers by way of compensation?"

Edgar blushed. "I always seem to get to telling lies," he muttered.

"And finally you said Mr. Serrocold was your father. Why?"

"Because that would stop them once for all, wouldn't it? If *he* was my father they couldn't do anything to me."

"Yes. But you accused him of being your enemy—of persecuting you."

"I know." He rubbed his forehead. "I got things all wrong. I get muddled sometimes."

"And you took the revolver from Mr. Walter Hudd's room?"

Edgar looked puzzled. "Did I? Is that where I got it?"

"Don't you remember where you got it?"

Edgar said: "I meant to threaten Mr. Serrocold with it. I meant to frighten him."

Inspector Curry said patiently: "How did you get the revolver?"

"You just said—out of Walter's room. I couldn't have got it any other way, could I?"

"I don't know," said Inspector Curry. "Somebody—might have given it to you?"

Edgar looked at him—his face a blank. "Is that how it happened? I don't remember. I was so worked up. I walked about the garden, trying to get calm. I thought people were spying on me, watching me, trying to hound me down. Even that nice white-haired old lady, Miss Marple. . . . I must have been mad. I don't remember where I was and what I was doing half of the time!"

"Surely you remember who told you Mr. Serrocold was your father?"

Edgar gave the same blank stare. "Nobody told me," he said sullenly. "It just came to me."

Inspector Curry sighed. He was not satisfied. But he judged he could make no further progress at present.

"Well, watch your step in future," he said.

"Yes, sir. Yes, indeed I will."

* * *

As Edgar went, Inspector Curry slowly shook his head. "These pathological cases are the devil!"

"D'you think he's mad, sir?" Sergeant Lake asked.

"Much less mad than I'd imagined. Weak-headed, boastful, a liar—yet a certain pleasant simplicity about him. Highly suggestible, I should imagine."

"You think someone *did* suggest things to him?"

"Oh, yes. Miss Marple was right there. She's a shrewd old bird. But I wish I knew who it was. He won't tell. If we only knew that. . . . Come on, Lake, let's have a thorough reconstruction of the scene in the hall."

* * *

Inspector Curry was sitting at the piano. "That fixes it pretty well," he said. Sergeant Lake was in a chair by the window overlooking the lake.

"If I'm half-turned on the piano-stool, watching the study door, like this," Curry said, "I can't see you."

Sergeant Lake rose softly and edged quietly through the door to the library.

"All this side of the room was dark. The only lights that were on were the ones beside the study door. No, Lake, I didn't see you go. Once in the library, you could go out through the other door to the corridor—two minutes to run along to the oak suite, shoot Gulbrandsen and come back through the library to your chair by the window."

Curry thought for a moment, and went on: "The women by the fire have their backs to you: Mrs. Serrocold was sitting here—on the right of the fireplace, near the study door. Everyone agrees she didn't move, and she's the only one who's in the line of direct vision. Miss Marple was here. She was looking past Mrs. Serrocold to the study. Mrs. Strete was on the

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

THIS photograph was taken aboard my father's ship, the s.s. *Sussex*, when I was about five. He was a Merchant Navy captain and, when he came back twice a year from his long voyages to Australia and South America, he was allowed to take us on trips he made in home waters.

It was great fun, of course, particularly when we went up the Manchester Ship Canal. At the time, ours was the biggest ship ever to do the journey. We had to leave the funnel at Runcorn; otherwise we would have been unable to get under the bridges.

On the open sea I was rather less happy, as I am not a particularly good sailor; once, going round the North of Scotland, I was sick all over my father's best uniform!

We lived near the docks in London, but when my father's ship was in other ports my mother took me with her and we stayed either on board the ship or in digs. On one occasion in Newcastle, dressed in a Little Red Riding Hood outfit, I played truant. "Marjorie's lost," the cry went up, and it was some time before I was found—dancing in the street to a barrel organ. Thereafter I was allowed out only when I had a tag with my name and address pinned on to my clothes!

After I had been taken to see the great Adeline Genée dance, my future—so far as I was concerned—was decided. I attended dancing classes and when I was twelve was chosen with seven other little girls from my dancing school to appear at a theatre. I had four heavenly weeks, but when my father returned home on leave and caught me sticking a label, CHILD ACTRESS AND DANCER, on my suitcase, I was packed off to boarding school at St. Albans and told to put out of my head any thought of going on the stage.

At school, the only things at which I shone were games—so I decided that, as I was not to be allowed to dance on the stage, I would be a teacher of dancing and games. I went to a training college for a year but was not really happy.

Then, because of illness, my father had to retire from the sea. It was necessary for me to earn my living immediately, and at last he gave me permission to try my luck on the stage.

I am sure that, in the end, my father was happy about my choice of career. But one of his proudest moments was when I was ten and we were playing cricket in the park. I hit the ball so hard that it struck him in the face, breaking one of his teeth and driving another through his cheek.

Next day, lying in bed swathed in bandages, far from being annoyed, he was pleased as punch that his small daughter could hit a ball so well!

Today she is a famous film-star. For her name, see page 31

left of the fireplace—close to the door out of the hall to the lobby, and it's a very dark corner. She *could* have gone and come back. Yes, it's possible."

Curry grinned suddenly. "And I could go." He slipped off the music stool and sidled along the wall and out through the door. "The only person who might notice I wasn't still at the piano would be Gina Hudd. And you remember what Gina said: 'Stephen was at the piano to begin with. *I don't know where he was later.*'"

"So you think it's Stephen?"

"I don't know who it is," said Curry. "It wasn't Edgar Lawson or Lewis Serrocold or Mrs. Serrocold or Miss Jane Marple. But for the rest. . . ." He sighed. "It's probably the American. Those fused lights were a bit too convenient a coincidence. And yet, you know, I rather like the chap. Still, that isn't evidence."

He peered thoughtfully at some music on the side of the piano. "Hindemith? Who's he? Never heard of him. Shostakovitch! What names these people have!" He looked down at the old-fashioned music-stool. He lifted the top of it.

"Here's the old-fashioned stuff. Handel's Largo; Czerny's Exercises; 'I Know a Lovely Garden'—vicar's wife used to sing that when I was a boy. . . ."

He stopped, the yellow pages of the song in his hand. Beneath them, reposing on Chopin's Preludes, was a small automatic pistol.

"Stephen Restarick!" exclaimed Sergeant Lake joyfully.

"Now don't jump to conclusions," Inspector Curry warned him. "Ten to one, that's what we're meant to think."

MISS MARPLE climbed the stairs and tapped on the door of Mrs. Serrocold's bedroom. "May I come in, Carrie Louise?"

"Of course, Jane dear."

Carrie Louise was sitting in front of the dressing-table, brushing her silvery hair. She turned her head over her shoulder. "Is it the police? I'll be ready in just a few minutes."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes, of course. Jolly insisted on my having my breakfast in bed. And Gina came into the room with it, on tiptoe, as though I might be at death's door! I don't think people realize that tragedies like Christian's death are much less of a shock to someone old. One knows by then how anything may happen—and how little anything really matters that happens in this world."

"Ye-es," said Miss Marple dubiously.

"Don't you feel the same, Jane? I should have thought you would."

Miss Marple said slowly: "Christian was murdered."

"Yes. . . . I see what you mean. You think that *does* matter?"

"Don't you?"

"Not to Christian," said Carrie Louise simply. "It matters, of course, to whoever murdered him."

"Have you any idea who murdered him?"

Mrs. Serrocold shook her head in a bewildered fashion. "No, I've absolutely no idea. I can't even think of a reason. It must have been something to do with his being here before—just over a month ago. Because otherwise I don't think he would have come here suddenly again for no particular reason. Whatever it was must have started off then. I've thought and I've thought, but I can't remember anything unusual."

"Who was here in the house?"

"Oh, the same people who are here now—yes, Alex was down from London about then. And—oh, yes—Ruth was here."

"Ruth?"

"My sister Ruth, dear. She was on a flying visit."

"Ruth," said Miss Marple again. Her mind was active. She was remembering the meeting she had had with Mrs. Ruth Van Rydock, Carrie Louise's sister, before coming to Stonygates. Ruth had been worried and apprehensive, too, after visiting her sister, but had not known why. Something was wrong, was all she could say. Christian Gulbrandsen had also been worried and apprehensive, but Christian Gulbrandsen had known or suspected something that Ruth did not. He had known or suspected that someone was trying to poison Carrie Louise. . . .

"You're all keeping something from me, aren't you?" asked Carrie Louise, suddenly.

Miss Marple jumped a little. "Why do you say that?"

"Because you are. Not Jolly. But everyone else. Even Lewis. He came in while I was having my breakfast, and he acted very oddly. He drank some of my coffee and even had a bit of toast and marmalade. That's so unlike him, because he always has tea and he doesn't like marmalade, so he must have been thinking of something else—and I suppose he must have forgotten to have his own breakfast. He does forget things like meals, and he looked so concerned and preoccupied."

There was an awkward little silence. Carrie Louise did not seem to notice it; a smile played about her mouth.

"What are you thinking about, Carrie Louise?"

Mrs. Serrocold seemed to come back from a long way away. "I was thinking of Gina," she said. "And of what you said about Stephen Restarick being in love with her. Gina's a dear girl, you know, and she does really love Wally. I'm sure she does."

Miss Marple said nothing.

"Girls like Gina like to kick up their heels a bit." Mrs. Serrocold spoke in an almost pleading voice. "They're young and they like to feel their power. It's natural, really. I know Wally Hudd isn't the sort of man we imagined Gina marrying. Normally she'd never have met him. But she did meet him, and fell in love with him—and presumably she knows her own business best."

"Probably she does," said Miss Marple.

"But it's so very important that Gina should be happy."

Miss Marple looked curiously at her friend. "It's important, I suppose, that everyone should be happy."

"Oh, yes. But Gina's a very special case. When we took her mother—when we took Pippa—we felt that it was an experiment that had simply got to succeed. You see, Pippa's mother. . . ." Carrie Louise paused.

Miss Marple said: "Who was Pippa's mother?"

CARRIE LOUISE seemed unable to make up her mind whether to speak or not. "Eric and I agreed that we would never tell anybody that. She never knew herself."

"I'd like to know," said Miss Marple.

Mrs. Serrocold looked at her doubtfully.

"It isn't just curiosity," said Miss Marple. "I really—well—*need* to know. I can hold my tongue, you know."

"You could always keep a secret, Jane," said Carrie Louise, with a reminiscent smile. "Dr. Galbraith—he's the Bishop of Cromer now—he knows. But no one else. Pippa's mother was Katherine Elsworth."

"Elsworth? Wasn't that the woman who administered arsenic to her husband?"

"Yes."

"She was hanged?"

"Yes. But, you know, it's not at all sure that she did it. The husband was an arsenic eater—they didn't understand so much about those things then."

"She soaked flypapers."

"The maid's evidence, we always thought, was definitely malicious."

"And Pippa was her daughter?"

"Yes. Eric and I determined to give the child a fresh start in life—as a Gulbrandsen—with love and care and all the things a child

Continued on page 28

Mr. Russell's stormy cavalcade of fame

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Melba once threw an inkwell at him; he heard Tetrazzini sing in her bath. His worst moment came when he tried to throw out a king

THOMAS ARTHUR RUSSELL is a spare, spruce septuagenarian who, for fifty-four years, has been practising the trade of impresario or organizer of public entertainments. This has left him with a rapidly thinning head of grey hair, a remarkable collection of autographed photographs and the habit of making a clear distinction between the musical talents and the personal whims of most of the famous musicians of this century.

Dame Nellie Melba once shied an inkwell at Russell; Luisa Tetrazzini sang backstage duets with him, and Sir Thomas Beecham accepted his offer of a half guinea fee. However, Russell is not the man to live on memories of Chaliapin, Kreisler, Ysaÿe, Clara Butt and Caruso. This year, at the age of seventy-two, he is staging about sixty concerts, and qualifying for the title of doyen of the impresarios by exercising exclusive control over the services of the brilliant Russian pianist, Leff Pouishnoff.

Russell books all Pouishnoff's performances, decides on the programme with the pianist, notifies the Performing Right Society, arranges for the piano, publicity and accommodation. He attends most of the concerts, although he frequently slips out once the recital starts. This habit persists, despite the fact that it once involved Russell in his most embarrassing moment, and made him undoubtedly the only manager who, inadvertently, tried to throw a member of the Royal Family out of a theatre.

It happened at Brighton, where Russell was staging a matinée concert. The seats were sold out and when a local character tried to cadge two free tickets, the manager was happy to refuse on the grounds that not one was left. "This chap always demanded free seats," Russell recalls. "He was a regular deadhead and he had come to expect complimentaries as his right."

Russell busied himself seeing the concert start, and then slipped out to a neighbouring restaurant for lunch. "When I returned to the theatre," he says, "I saw the back of a man who was peeping through a chink in the curtains, and it struck me that it was this deadhead trying to see the show for nothing. I marched right up, slapped him on the shoulder, and roared at him, 'You *are* determined to have a free view, aren't you!' The man turned to face me—and who was it but King Edward VII!

"'Please forgive me, Your Worship—I mean Your Majesty,' was all I could say. Then he apologized to me. 'I know I shouldn't have done this,' the King explained. I asked him to come in, but he said he couldn't because he had his little dog with him. I looked around and there was Caesar, his terrier, tied to the railings."

Leff Pouishnoff and his wife discuss a new concert with Russell (right). He fixes everything

Even Melba's temperamental outbursts failed to equal the confusion Russell f t as the result of laying hands on the King. When Melba hurled an inkwell full of ink at him, Russell ducked. The missile went through a boudoir glass, and it cost the Australian prima donna £14 to replace the mirror. "Melba," Russell says, "threw everything at me except a grand piano. She had a wonderful voice—but what a violent temper!"

Melba Stopped The Clock

One occasion when Russell rather admired Melba for an outburst was in a town in the north of England, where the town hall clock chimed the quarter hours and played "O God, Our Help In Ages Past" on the hour. Melba's sleep was interrupted by the clock, and the following morning she summoned Russell. "That —— clock," she announced. "If it is not stopped there will be no concert tonight."

Russell went to the town clerk and then to the mayor. In the end, the council was summoned, and they bowed to Melba's ultimatum. The clock was silent until the singer left the town.

At one stage, Russell was managing tours by both Melba and her greatest rival, Luisa Tetrazzini. "They hated each other," he says. "When I joined Tetrazzini after a Melba concert, she would say, 'So you've come from your beautiful Melba. You no love me any more.' Melba's language was more forceful. She would demand, "How's your washerwoman, Tetrazzini?'"

Tetrazzini had her own eccentricities, including her insistence on being paid in cash before each appearance. Russell accompanied her on one tour when she received £600 a performance. Before each concert, Russell would count out £600 in notes, and the singer would stuff them in a bag. "At the end of the tour," he declares, "she had £15,000 in notes, which she would carry about in her bag. She had a mania about being cheated and was suspicious of everyone. On the other hand, she was liberality itself, and would think nothing of handing me £100 for a Christmas present. Tetrazzini had a marvellous voice, but the public never heard it at its most glorious moments. Those were when she was in her bath. You could hardly believe how beautifully she sang then."

Russell, who is possessed of what he classifies as a rusty bass-baritone, is still a fervent believer in bathroom melody and makes it a daily practice in the early morning. Many young singers today could profit from the idea, he feels. Modern artists, according to him, do not practise enough, although he does not consider they should go as

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far as Tetrazzini, whose father locked her in the cellar every day until she had ranged through all her scales.

Not only were older stars more impressive, Russell says, but they also drew bigger fees. Possibly the greatest money earner on the concert stage was Jan Kubelik, the Czech violinist. In one day the impresario saw him earn 32,000 dollars for two Chicago performances. Russell was then one of twenty retainers whom the violinist took on a ten-month tour of the United States. They travelled in a private six-coach train, and Kubelik even maintained two private chefs. After paying off his staff, Kubelik returned to Europe with £123,000 in his pocket.

Standing Room—£5

"I have seen people wave £5 notes in a frantic effort to be allowed to stand for a Kubelik concert," Russell recalls. "He did one thing no other artist has equalled—gave fifteen recitals at Queen's Hall in one season. All the seats were sold out. He was a superfirework performer and a great showman. He had a tremendous mop of hair, and I do believe he was the first to start the fashion that now connects long hair with classical music."

Not all artists commanded fees like Kubelik, and Russell remembers offering half a guinea to one young man who came to his office looking for employment as an accompanist. The youth sent in a card—you could get them then at fifty for sixpence, Russell says—with the name *Mr. Thomas Beecham, Accompanist*. The impresario was not impressed. He did not even connect the name with the family of proprietary medicine manufacturers.

Several months later a singer asked Russell to give her an audition. She had no accompanist, so Beecham's name was dug from the files. He agreed to play for 10s. 6d.

"He played atrociously," Russell maintains. "The singer was none too good, either, and when she asked me to stage a London recital for her I tried to discourage the idea. She insisted, and again Beecham was sent for. The singer agreed to pay him one guinea for the concert if he would give her as many rehearsals as she wanted.

"The recital took place, and I was ashamed to be associated with it. Beecham played so loudly that the singer could not be heard, which was, perhaps, not a bad idea. The Press roasted the singer, and one critic added that the accompanist only made things worse."

Not long ago, Russell met Sir Thomas Beecham after a concert and reminded him of the incident. "He laughed like blazes," says Russell.

Another current celebrity whom Russell started off is Harold Fielding, now, at the age of thirty-four, one of the busiest impresarios in the world. Russell met Fielding when the latter was in short trousers and making a name—but not much fortune—as "the brilliant boy violinist." "He got a very fair Press," Russell recalls, "and I arranged a tour of Holland for him."

When he was in his early twenties, Fielding decided that there was a greater future in promoting other artists than in playing himself. His father got in touch with Russell, who tried to discourage young Fielding. It was the beginning of the war, and business was not good. However, Fielding was determined, and the two worked together for a time. They parted amicably over the younger man's determination to book variety and concert artists in the same series. Russell returned to his life work of presenting serious music.

Pouishnoff, on whom Russell now concentrates his attention, lacks the fiery temper that made life with Melba exciting. The pianist is a man of regular habits, who invariably arrives in a town at noon before a concert, lunches and then hangs his own DO NOT DISTURB sign on his hotel room and sleeps until 5 p.m. He takes tea and then dresses for the concert.

"It's not like the old days," Russell declares. "My first great artist was Madame Antoinette Sterling, possibly the finest singer of Scottish ballads of all time. She was a Quakeress and many a time, when her concerts were due to start, she was nowhere to be found. Usually an intensive search would locate her in the nearest church or meeting hall."

Singing's Golden Age

Madame Sterling always wore Quaker costume and even refused to don evening dress when commanded to sing at Windsor before Queen Victoria. She was not the flamboyant type like Melba or Tetrazzini, who belonged to the golden era of music.

In those days, before the first World War, Russell says, artists commanded up to £2,000 for a public performance or £3,000 for an appearance at a private party. London hostesses would spend as much as £500 for flowers at a soirée which might cost as much as £5,000.

"Kubelik or Kreisler would get two to three thousand guineas for a couple of hours' playing at such a party," Russell declares. "Not all artists liked these private appearances, and there is probably considerable truth behind the story of one man who asked for a fee of one thousand guineas from a hostess who had offered him £500.

"'I can't pay you that much,' said the hostess. 'I can only afford £500, and I don't want you mingling with my guests.'

"'In that case,' replied the artist, 'there will be no fee at all.'" THE END

TAKE MY TIP

LAMPS made from old wine bottles are usually marred by the flex hanging untidily from the lampholder. Yet it is quite easy to drill a hole near the bottom of the bottle and lead the flex through that.

Dissolve shredded camphor in a few drops of turpentine until no more will dissolve. Use this to lubricate the point of a high-speed steel twist drill.

To start the hole, bind a piece of curved wood firmly to the bottle, and drill through the wood first. The bottle can be held by wedging it in a doorway. —William Howell, Tonbridge.

JOHN BULL *pays three guineas, on publication, for simple, original tips that show other readers how to carry out useful jobs in better ways. Address contributions to TAKE MY TIP,* JOHN BULL, *189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, including (if they help) diagrams or photographs with the text.*

THE HAPPY HUNTED

Continued from page 9

moved off again in a captured Ford V8 staff car to Mersa Matruh, escorted by a solid, bull-necked young Nazi officer. Reaching the Matruh fortress we were handed over to the Prisoner-of-War Guard Battalion, and put in a room in a one time Egyptian officers' mess.

Our particular building was built round a small courtyard, our side being two rooms thick, one opening inwards, on to the court, the other on to an outer colonnade or balcony. Walden and I lived in an outer room, while a German officer used the inner. A sentry guarded each entrance. The lavatories were at one end of the building on the outer wall. They had high, small windows, covered with wire netting—except for the Commandant's. There was ample room for me to climb through, and a mere nine-foot drop outside.

Because of my rank I demanded the use of the Commandant's lavatory. Permission was granted, and the scene was all set for an escape attempt. Visiting the confounded place, however, was nearly as difficult as entering the Pentagon at Washington. One approached the inner sentry and coyly mentioned the magic word *"Abort,"* and he shouted for the guard commander, who acted as escort. Initially he kept me in view, but that soon palled.

"Gyppo Tummy"

On the third morning, Ted and I developed "Gyppo Tummy"—officially only—keeping on the run, individually or collectively, all day. By the twenty-third visit, and nightfall, poor old Sergeant Fritz, our guard commander, was absolutely fed up. Speed being the vital factor in both actions, by then we had worked the procedure round to suit our main purpose.

Hurrying up to the sentry, I would gasp *"Abort!"* and rush across immediately. Walden followed closely, but remained in sight at the lavatory door, waiting for Sergeant Fritz. That allowed me ten seconds start, and I reckoned on climbing up to and out of the window in half that time.

One flaw in the plot caused some worry. To keep in character I couldn't carry any gear—not that we had much, being still dressed in shirt and shorts. However, our neighbour, whose room we traversed, had a full water-bottle hanging on the wall; and nothing was more essential for a desert trek of a hundred miles or more. It would stow away inside my shirt under one arm for the short dash across in view of the sentry. Food supply was no problem—three biscuits.

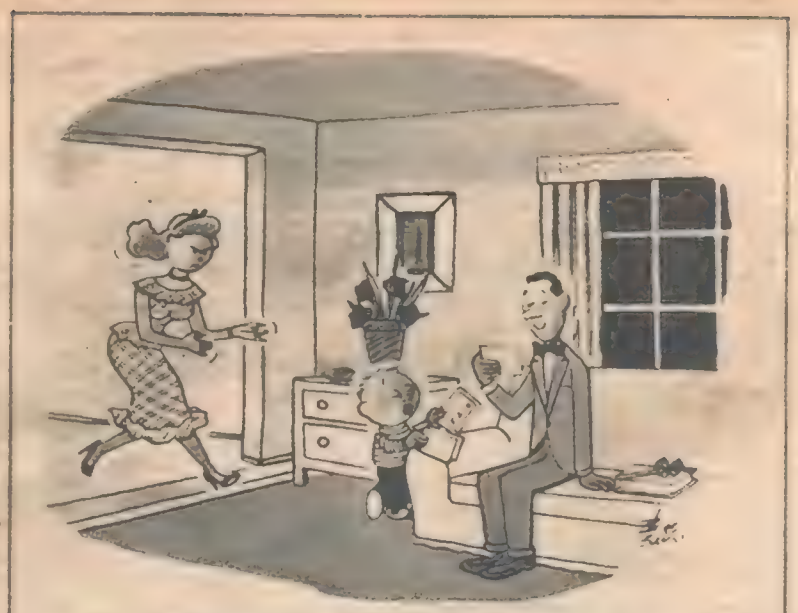
About 9 p.m. seemed a good time to go. Gathering up the water-bottle inside my shirt, I went through the standard drill, dashed into the lavatory and scrambled through the window. Fritz came in flashing his torch just a split second too soon, and the beam caught me. Before he could do more than yell, I had dropped and was away.

While absolute pandemonium broke loose behind, I walked quietly on into the night, over the first obstacle of the bitumen road, passing Germans and Italians without attracting attention. Much remained to be done, however, before getting clear of Matruh fortress. It was enclosed by sea and by a maze of minefields and wire obstacles.

Through The Minefields

At this stage the air-raid warning started. Dodging round various dumps and innumerable bivvies, I headed for the road junction near the airfield, hoping to get across the last internal road there before tackling the outer defences. I crawled very cautiously over the last road, flattening in the dust while vehicles roared by, and then tackled the obstacle course.

The next two hours became a never-ending nightmare of barbed wire arrayed in fantastic ways, with hectic interludes when crossing minefields. The mines were mostly Egyptian pattern. Filled with gelignite and exploded by crushing a glass ampoule, they deteriorated after six months, to become either very touchy or almost inert. The former went off if touched; the latter just did not function. When I finally climbed the escarpment at midnight I was safe, but fragments of skin or clothing remained in thirty-eight varied wire entanglements.



". . . This one of Sis when she had braces is sixpence. . . . This one when she was six months old lying on the blanket is a shilling, and the . . ."

On top of the escarpment, with the flat desert stretching away south, I rested awhile, breathing the lovely night air and enjoying the arch of sparkling stars. Coming down to more prosaic requirements, I changed round my stockings, took a rinse of water, and plotted the course. Three directions were feasible—due south until clear of all normal tracks before turning east; or east for fifteen miles, paralleling the bitumen road, to reach the next water-point at Quasaba; or somewhere in between.

I compromised on the middle course, heading roughly south-east. Trouble came quickly. The escarpment here is eaten into by numerous rough wadis. Putting a foot wrong going down one broken face resulted in a slightly strained tendon, which became more troublesome as the journey progressed.

Dogs On My Track

It must have been on the second hourly halt that I heard hounds baying along the back track. I made off smartly for the railway, hoping to upset them by walking along the rails. Somewhere dredged up from memory, I knew that cold iron did not carry a scent. So half an hour later I solemnly tight-roped along a loop of the Egypt-Libya line to fool the dogs. As a second string, the bitumen road had possibilities. After struggling over some infernally mixed loose sand and broken rock area, I finally reached the road two miles short of Quasaba and walked towards the waterpoint.

Sentries prowling round the waterpoint itself effectively stopped any chance of refilling there, so I swung over the railway into the mile-wide strip of sandhills reaching to the sea.

The eastern sky was lightening preparatory to another superheated day, and a hide-up had to be found before the local population were out and about. First visitors were an Italian signal party who started repairing the telephone line running along the railway. This involved climbing poles almost on the lip of my hideout.

There was only one answer for me—get going smartly. Many Germans and some Italians wandered round stripped to the waist, so, slipping off my shirt, I stood up quickly and, expecting to be hailed immediately, strolled away towards the beach. Nobody took the slightest notice. As I climbed over the last sandhills the bright blue sea looked so tempting that I stripped off and swam about for ten minutes. Delightful and most refreshing both to body and morale.

For nearly three miles I strolled eastwards through the deserted coastal strip, empty of humans but cluttered with the debris from captured British troops. A somewhat battered but still serviceable South African helmet, thrown up by the tide, and some fly-netting, provided me with most valuable, if unorthodox, headgear.

Knowing how popular the beach front was with both armies as a residential area, I was not surprised at the presence of bathers and men moving around the dunes. Swerving inland to avoid them, I walked up the salt marsh which formed the flat between the railway embankment and the first swell of ground traversed by the main road. It was sparsely covered with camel thorn about eighteen inches high.

Suddenly two Germans stood up in the scrub about 300 yards straight ahead. Dropping flat, I belly-crawled off to one side, then peered carefully through a bush. Over on the rising ground I spotted another small group, also using glasses.

Expecting every minute to hear the scream of bullets, I belly-crawled back to the embankment, my knees and elbows becoming torn by scrub and rock-like salt crust.

Then I noticed that the bank was covered with large clumps of desert creeper, which might offer an uncomfortable yet safe sanctuary. Risking the wrath of existing tenants—snakes, scorpions and tarantulas as possibles, thousands of lesser itchy bugs for certain — I stretched flat under the long tendrils, and awaited developments. Ten minutes later a truck roared past, stopped at the next culvert, went on again, and came back slowly on the other side of the embankment. Trick to me, it seemed.

The sun and the bugs soon drove me from cover. Lying there sweltering, I had to have a drink or suffer the tortures of the damned, and only 200 yards away was the blue, cool Mediterranean. Better have comfort than such itchy security. Going through the culvert, I crept slowly across the dunes, still in view of the confounded watchers on the opposite slope. Once more I went unseen; once more I hid my clothes and dived into that marvellous surf, to soothe my smarting scratches and work out the next move.

South Into The Desert

Like every desert plan on any scale, water was the main factor. Twenty miles farther on, in the Baggush defence area, there were several possible sources, and every yard of that area was familiar ground. Baggush must be my next objective, either by the crowded coast route or round by the less-populated open going farther south. The former was only feasible at night; therefore it meant waiting all day, lying up, hot and bothered, among the rocks. The latter involved crossing the bitumen road, but could be risked immediately.

Always an impatient waiter and an optimist, south I went, stripped to the waist again and looking really Italian in my funny headgear. Waiting for a gap in the steady two-way stream of traffic, I walked across between a German staff car and a ten-ton Fiat. They passed within five yards of me, and a dozen other assorted vehicles followed while I was still in view.

Before heading towards Baggush, it was necessary to circumnavigate an Axis airfield. So I walked on south for nearly five miles, carefully examining the numerous dead vehicles abandoned by retreating remnants of the Eighth Army. The twenty-seventh produced an answer of a kind, having liquid in the radiator, which dribbled out, rusty and uninviting. Nor were appearances deceptive, because it made me sick. Nevertheless, I filled up and marched on eastwards, hoping to clear the airfield.

Time had also marched on. The rays of the setting sun lit up the gently rising ground ahead. They also lit up enemy troops moving there, evidently occupying an outpost line or cordon for airfield protection against our raiding parties. Knowing how poor their view would be looking up sun, I worked slowly forward, carefully noting where each group settled down. Then immediately darkness came I catwalked in my rubber-soled desert boots through a gap between two posts.

I Get A Fright

I pushed on through the night, making a wide circuit back towards the railway, intending to use it as my highway. Here, some time well after midnight, the next big fright occurred.

While I was resting under bushes near the embankment, a clanking, clattering racket coming from up behind grew to a roar. Grabbing boots and gear, I dashed clear. Then, along the line came a thing looking like an up-ended flat-iron. It was a German diesel engine dragging half a dozen of our trucks. Bumping and rattling over the neglected track, this quaint train disappeared on towards Baggush going my way, but unfortunately I was barefooted and too scared to grab a ride.

With all this meandering, the night had almost gone. Fading stars indicated first light and the necessity for hunting cover. Feeling very miserable as to my progress, I turned south once more. Then the landscape imperceptibly cleared and the dark bar of escarpment loomed ahead. All was well. I was inside the Baggush defences, where almost every stone was familiar.

Climbing the first spur sufficiently, I spied out the land. About half a mile away, the flat covers of the reservoirs, which my own sappers had built long before, showed up conspicuously among a maze of slit trenches, shelters and barbed wire. Halfway to them a deep wadi cut into the escarpment. It was a favourite home with Baggush dwellers because it contained two rather ragged palm trees and the steep banks gave excellent cover against air raiders.

Sure enough a German workshop unit had settled in it, effectively blocking my approach to that vital water. And they were already up and on the job at sunrise. Smoke from the cook's dugout brought tantalizing visions of sizzling bacon, while outside stood rows of water-cans. I toyed with the idea of a raid, but the conditions were not good enough nor was the situation sufficiently desperate.

Climbing the steep bluff, I reached the top of the escarpment. Beyond the minefields was gently undulating desert—hundreds of miles of it stretching right, left and centre. Here was freedom of movement to the nth degree—given sufficient water. Somewhere out there, wandering among the camel thorn with their meagre flocks and ragged tents, were Bedouin tribesmen who might be friendly despite our military reverses. And they had ample water stored in cunningly concealed wells. Treading carefully through a minefield gap, I walked out into the wide-open spaces.

Suddenly, over the near ridge appeared a Bedouin riding a donkey. I swerved over to meet him, reckoning

it was a fifty-fifty chance that he would give me away to the Germans. Nearer acquaintance showed the usual dirty, cotton-swathed, lean figure topped by a straggling grey beard—and honest eyes.

In pantomime, eked out by half a dozen Arabic words, I explained myself and my urgent needs. He never hesitated. A wide sweep of his arm to the south—"*moya*," "*bir*," ten fingers up "*kilometre*," then a flood of Arabic and expressive gesture. Clear enough. There was a well ten kilometres south, where his people were encamped.

Two hours of steadily increasing heat and thirst, plodding over interminable broken rock — and there, crouching among the camel thorn in a slight depression, were sprawled the black-and-tan Bedouin tents. Barking dogs ran out to greet me, followed by small children—all dirty, all curious. Men appeared more decorously, while women peeped through odd crannies.

I started on my story. Water and lentil stew in a British cooker were forthcoming at once, followed by a tin of bully-beef and some biscuits, which I stowed away for future use. Last, but far from least, out came a bottle of Canadian beer! Never before or since has beer tasted so delicious.

I paid for my food and drink and, heartened by the knowledge that Bedouin help was available, I hiked on, feeling on top of the world again.

Not Tents; Just Bushes

As the sun slid down behind the hazy rim, I could see on the horizon yet another Bedouin encampment. So that night I did myself well, sleeping on a soft patch of sand, rolled up in part of a tent salvaged from a burnt-out six-pounder portee.

A dismal picture was revealed by the cold light of dawn. The "Bedouin encampment" conjured up by dusk and optimism was merely queer-shaped bushes. Around the horizon not a solitary camel wandered anywhere. During the night I had finished the water in the beer bottle as well as most of that in my water-bottle. Cold, rather stiff in the joints from unaccustomed hard lying, and not nearly so smug, I pushed on eastwards.

After two or three miles some camels came up over the skyline. I sighted two boys who promptly bolted, swift as gazelle, at any attempt to reach them, then an old greybeard rose like a Jack-in-the-box out of the bushes where he had been sleeping peacefully.

Turning my empty bottle upside down, I waved slowly round the horizon and said: "*Bir? Moya!*" On

"I'll ring you back, Fred—I've an idea there's someone burning in the kitchen"

the fourth try he understood, nodded vigorously and pointed north. Then in pantomime with aircraft noises and the "Brr" of machine guns, he indicated that the water was alongside an occupied airfield. Having put that over, he examined my watch, then said in so many gestures: "You give me your watch when I return, and I'll take the water-bottle up to the *bir* and fill it, while you rest in the bushes."

Carrying my water-bottle, he went north, growing smaller and smaller, until he blended into the shimmering camel thorn. After three hot, restless hours I came to the conclusion that I had behaved like an idiot in giving him my valuable water-bottle. Panicking over the water problem, I tramped ten miles, going round in a circle.

At last, late in the afternoon, three men appeared who were prepared to talk. Again I explained my need, this time producing the watch as barter. After some haggling among themselves, two of them walked off out of sight—and came back in twenty minutes carrying a burnt, battered two-gallon petrol can, full of rather muddy water. Handing over the watch, I went on my way, rejoicing.

Nearly an hour later, as the sun began to set, I noticed a dirty-white figure coming through the bushes. He waved and I waited. And of course it was old Greybeard, the faithful Gunga Din of this story, bearing gifts of great price. My water-bottle, full; another full two-gallon can; three Bedouin "flapjacks" and four Oxo tablets. Heaven knows where the Oxo came from.

Without any hesitation he handed everything over, merely shrugging his shoulders as if to say: "San Fairy Ann, it doesn't matter"—when I showed in pantomime that my watch had gone for the other can of water. He wasn't interested in a fountain-pen, but I gave him a chit for £10 "payable to bearer, an unknown Bedouin."

Once more my future seemed reasonably good—with ample water, a certain amount of food, and no worries in the world, except the remaining sixty miles to tramp. The next three days and three nights are rather hazy. My feet had blistered, the soles having come loose on my desert boots so that I was repeatedly having to tie them up with string. Also the scratches and cuts received while crawling round the salt pan had gone septic.

In addition to that, walking by daylight without a watch for checking up with the sun, made the problem of keeping direction most difficult. Hoping for the best, I tramped steadily on.

On the sixth day, still not having met anybody except the Bedouin, I was making good progress along a ridge, when off on the flat below I saw a derelict British tank.

The coolest place in the desert to rest during the heat of the day was underneath an armoured vehicle. Here was the ideal hide-out to spend three or four midday hours. On the other hand, anybody roaming round would be curious enough to inspect such a prominent vehicle. I decided, after searching the tank for water without success, it was better to move on into the camel thorn across the hollow and lie up among the bushes as usual.

Half-way across, out on open slab rock without a vestige of cover, I had that feeling round the back of my neck of something unpleasant coming up behind. I looked round and there, about 400 yards away, were two German jeeps (*volkswagon*) bouncing along towards me. Sitting up in them were men with rifles ready and field-glasses round their necks—obviously hunting something. The nearest vehicle drove up. They were Germans, evidently panzer officers.

I had my story ready. I was an Italian engineer on reconnaissance, whose motor-bike had broken down and who was trying to return to his unit near Kaponga. I saluted and put it across in my broken German. The leader was suspicious to start with, because anyone walking alone in the desert would naturally be suspect. But he appeared to accept my story, and when I asked for a lift, he took it quite well.

However, the senior officer was in the second jeep and my interrogator signalled him across. When they came up within a few yards, a third officer suddenly waved his rifle in the air and said: "Hallo! New Zealand general!" He had seen me at Rommel's headquarters six days before and recognized me despite a frightful growth of beard, and my peculiar headgear.

One Gazelle—One General!

That was the end of my desert trek. They were three subalterns from Rommel's crack reconnaissance regiment out on a gazelle hunt a mere five miles west of their occupied territory. They treated me well—gave me cold tea and what was left of their lunch, which they had already eaten alongside the tank I had recently visited. We went on, hunted through the country beyond, and after a sharp chase and a lot of shooting bagged a gazelle.

One of the officers proceeded to gralloch the beast, and back we went to their headquarters. As we drove through the lines, dusty and very tired in my case, various members of the unit called out: "*Habt Ihr Glück gehabt?*" (any luck?), and the reply always was: "*Ja! Eine Gazelle, einen General.*"

NEXT WEEK: I escape on the Rome Express, and dash for the Swiss frontier

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A BULL FOR JOSÉ

Continued from page 11

let the cape fan out in front of him. Rodero saw it, raised his head high, higher; took one, two, three steps and galloped.

Lafita stood and waited. When the horns were almost on him, he dropped his right hand backwards and away, led Rodero past him in a long, slow, scarlet arabesque. He turned about and Rodero charged again; three times bull and man revolved on the floating nexus of the cape. Then Lafita, head bent and feet together, ended the series with a *veronica* which enveloped Rodero like the folding of a giant wing.

The crowd had risen but he hardly heard the clamour. He walked back to the barrier, serious and happy, swinging the cape on his arm. This time he had a bull! Delgado handed him the towel with one of his rare smiles. He said: "It's going to be all right." Lafita nodded. Everyone round him was smiling. He noticed a small face looking up at him hotly, a bareheaded, dark-eyed boy whose hands gripped the barrier with whitened knuckles.

"Who's the kid?"

"Son of a Ruhio *vaquero*. He slipped through the guard at the door. He says this is his bull and that he brought it here for you."

"Well, let him stay. It's a big day for him." Lafita grinned down at the boy and José turned his head away. At fourteen, the mixture of bitter and sweet can go to the head. . . .

When the time came for the last act of the tragedy, the crowd was quiet with the sense of a great occasion—a mighty bull awaiting a mighty death. Rodero stood alone in the ring's centre. The six coloured *banderillas*, which Lafita had planted, drooped from his neck. His flanks were heaving but the head was still held high; the dark blood hung like garlands round his shoulders.

Lafita had never been more confident of a bull in his life. He pulled the sword from the scabbard and prepared to meet the great bull alone.

Delgado sensed the matador's exultation and shook his head.

"Be careful, Miguel. He's got his head up. Pass him from underneath."

Lafita tested the sword by bending it against the barrier. "I know how to take him, Marcial. It's the bull of my life. The bull of my life," he repeated, as the trumpets sounded and he passed into the ring.

His left hand held the sword and the red cloth square of the *muleta*. He went out a few paces, stopped and turned. Holding the sword below his heart, he raised his hat high in his right arm towards the box of the president and all the standing crowd. It was the *brindis*, the formal dedication of the bull's death.

Lafita stopped five yards from the bull; the horns went up. He draped the cloth over the sword and held it low and gently swinging in both his hands; it was a flag. He looked at the bull and called it—"*Ahé, toro. Ahé!*"—and the bull stamped once and charged. He came fast, his hooves pounded in the silence. He reached the man; the flag rose slowly, and the man and the bull were one. One for a moment; then the bull was past and the flag hung limply; the man was a statue and the statue was alive. The crowd gave a long shout.

For timeless minutes, bull matched man on the heights of *tauromaquia*; a bull fighting legend was born. The man was all grave grace and passion controlled, the bull all fire and nobility. Death was present as the black bull met the frail figure in red and gold; it was a symbol of death which they created together.

Then the crowd called for the moment of real death.

Bull and man stood in the ring's centre, with twenty yards between them. Lafita was a statue once more; he held the red cloth low across his body, he looked over his left shoulder along the sword's length at the bull. In a moment he would call and Rodero would charge towards his death. But the statue came to life, for a small wind shook the cloth, billowing it backwards out of the bull's sight. Lafita relaxed and turned away. He walked five paces and faced about; as he faced about, he tripped; as he fell, Rodero charged.

The crowd caught its breath and was silent. Rodero came on; his head was down, the short legs beat between the horns and sent the red dust rolling behind. A dozen capes flapped far away, a man shouted, but the bull came on.

Lafita turned his face to the sand and covered his head with his arms.

Then a shrill, small voice called, "*Ahé, Rodero, ahé!*" and a small figure bolted from the barrier. Rodero stopped, skidding; and José cried his name once more. The bull's head went up and he turned towards the boy. Lafita got to his feet, his men were around him; the crowd had risen, shouting, as José's hand caressed the now lowered, dusty muzzle.

Lafita looked towards the stands; they were white with waving handkerchiefs and shawls. One cry beat and echoed round the ring:

"Grace for the bull! Grace!"

Lafita heard it and raised both arms to the president. A figure stood up and there was a flutter of white from the box. José did not see it. One by one he pulled the darts from the bloody neck and dropped them on the ground. Then he saluted Lafita and, with one arm across the bull's high shoulder, led Rodero slowly across the sand. The gates of the *toril* opened and closed behind them.

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24" 36"	24" 36"	26" 38"	26" 38"	28" 40"
	26" 38"	26" 36"	28" 40"	30" 42"
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THE CLOCK THAT WALKED

Continued from page 13

always there," Miss Pipe chimed in.

"Of course it was there! I'm sure of it," said the rector, beginning to feel irritated.

"Well, Rector, it seems rude to disagree, but the clock was *not* there when I emptied the box, so unless it has walked back since, it is still not there," finished Miss Pipe, laughing faintly.

"Then I'll get the lantern. We will go and see and decide the matter," said the rector, smiling with difficulty at Miss Pipe, pink and important, fidgeting with her hat.

"Good idea," said the colonel. "Can't have clocks disappearing like this, what!"

And the whole meeting rose up and followed the rector's swinging lantern into the November night, and up the long pathway leading to the church, whose soaring tower was the chief glory of the village. It was pricked about with stars on this cold night. They trooped up to the west door beneath the overshadowing age and weight of the tower. The door creaked.

"Well, I'm blessed!" ejaculated the rector in those whispered accents preserved for a hallowed atmosphere. "Well, I'm blessed! You're perfectly right!"

He held the lantern up high, so that the meeting could see quite distinctly the patch of wall where the grandmother clock had always stood.

"You see!" said Miss Pipe.

"Good heavens!" murmured the meeting in dismay.

"Stolen, do you think, Rector?" began Mrs. Cross, shocked yet triumphant.

"Good gracious, no!" said the rector. "There must be some explanation. Old Compton may have taken it, to regulate it. He always does keep an eye on the clock." And at the word "clock" the rector's voice burst into full bass like the organ upon the gloria: for they were out of the church again.

"But he doesn't move it to regulate it! And to say nothing to anyone——" exclaimed Mrs. Cross.

THE rector thought for a moment. "He may have come while no one was about. I'll ask Henry."

Henry was the rector's man, who did a great deal for him in his house and his parish.

"Well, let us not worry about it, Rector, but I thought I had better mention it," said Miss Pipe, clinging to her position as bearer of the news.

"Very right of you. If anything has happened to it, we should want to know when it disappeared." The feet crunched down the gravel of the church path. "Good night, thanks to all for coming!" And the rector made for the rectory.

"A most extraordinary thing," said the colonel.

"I do hope nothing has happened to it," said Mrs. Cross.

"Strange for Miss Patter and Miss Moss not to be there. They always are," said someone, glancing at the house opposite the church where these ladies lived. It was in total darkness.

The next morning the rector visited old Compton. But the old man had not removed the clock for regulating and stubbornly refused to believe it could have disappeared.

The rector left him and went into the post office.

"Have you found out about the clock, sir?" began Miss White eagerly, primed with the whole story by an early customer.

"Not yet, Miss White. I'm setting inquiries afoot," said the rector bravely, not knowing in the least where to inquire next. For Henry, when questioned, had known nothing.

By lunchtime the rector had telephoned Cully, the policeman, who had already heard. Mrs. Cousins, on the exchange, listened in, regarding it as her duty in a case where the rector telephoned the policeman, to know all about it. As the exchange was in the next village, it happened that by twelve thirty—when Mrs. Cousins had been home to her dinner — the next village knew all about it, too. The whole neighbourhood was in a hum.

Into the turmoil returned Miss Patter and Miss Moss from their brief visit to the nearest town. Mrs. Cross visited about teatime, only to find to her chagrin that Miss Pipe had forestalled her.

"I just came in to say," she began, gazing sternly at Miss Pipe, "that at the parochial meeting it was decided to ask you to do the last week this month—the flowers, I mean—instead of the third. Is that all right?"

Miss Pipe smiled grimly. She knew what Mrs. Cross had come in to say.

"Have a cup of tea, do," said Miss Moss, and she tripped through to the dining-room to get another cup. Miss Patter followed Miss Moss, suggesting she should get another cake; Mrs. Cross followed Miss Patter, protesting she should do no such thing; Miss Pipe followed Mrs. Cross, moistening her lips, because she had not yet mentioned the clock, and now Mrs. Cross was here she was afraid she would get in first.

The four ladies trotted through the hall into the dining-room, where only firelight flickered. Miss Moss reached the other door and turned on the light, which fell upon polished wood, brass plates in a row on the window seat, an oak chest, and, in the corner next to the hall door, the grandmother clock from the church. . . .

MRS. CROSS looked at Miss Pipe in genuine astonishment. "Miss Moss, Miss Patter," she said, "what on earth is this clock doing here?"

"Oh, that clock! Bless it! Isn't it sweet? We are so pleased with it. It exactly fits that corner, as we knew it would."

"But it's the church clock!" squeaked Miss Pipe.

"Not now," explained Miss Patter. "Didn't the dear rector tell you?"

"Tell us what?" demanded Mrs. Cross.

"Why, that he had sold it to us! Didn't you know? We had talked of it before, but we hardly expected it to be arranged so easily," said Miss Moss. "We were quite surprised ourselves."

"But what do you mean? We have all been worried to death the last four days about the clock! The rector doesn't know anything about it."

"In that case," observed Miss Patter to Miss Moss, "you would think the rector would have returned the fifteen pounds, dear."

"He is so forgetful."

"Fifteen pounds!" shrieked Mrs. Cross. "You mean you gave the rector fifteen pounds!"

"Certainly," said Miss Patter. "We found the clock in the hall the night before we went away. . . . We imagined the rector had brought it over, with his man to help, you know, though we were afraid it would have been heavy even for two. We were very

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Bad as all that?

WHEN people urge us to make the best of a bad job, they mean it kindly: but it isn't always good advice. Too often they expect us to sit down patiently under adversity.

It's often much wiser to try to change the adverse circumstances into something better. They have got to be desperate circumstances indeed that can't be altered to some extent by courage and determination. Certainly what can't be cured must be endured, but let's be quite sure there is no cure before we give in!

by ROFFE THOMPSON

pleased, though startled at first, since it looked like a person standing in the dark hall, as we came into the house."

"About the fifteen pounds," said Miss Moss. "This was the sum we had offered the rector some time ago, when we discussed it. But we happened to have the money by us, so we popped it in an envelope and went straight round with it. We put it under the rector's door, as there was nobody in. There was evensong that night: it was All Hallows, I remember."

"Then, of course, the next day we went away, so we have really only enjoyed the clock today. Charming, isn't it? Milk and sugar?"

"But . . . but . . ." stuttered Mrs. Cross, rising to her feet. "This is terrible. Are you sure you gave the rector fifteen pounds?"

"Certain, aren't we, dear?" said Miss Patter, cutting the cake.

"But hasn't he sent a receipt?"

"Receipt?" Miss Moss looked blank for a moment. "Why, no, we didn't expect a receipt from the rector. Certainly not. His word will be receipt enough."

"But where is the money?" cried Mrs. Cross, "and how could he have sold the clock and know nothing about it? And without consulting anyone! It's ridiculous!"

"But he knows all about it, my dear, you will find. Naturally."

"Perhaps the poor rector has had a loss of memory. How very sad!" said Miss Pipe, only just recovering from her surprise.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Cross. "You can't forget fifteen pounds. Where is the fifteen pounds?"

"I'm sure I couldn't say," began Miss Moss cautiously.

"But doubtless the good rector will have some convincing explanation," said Miss Patter in the same tone.

The four women looked at each other.

ALMOST the whole village took sides about the clock. Mrs. Cross led the rector's side. She reported to the schoolmistress: "The poor man was completely and utterly staggered. Miss Patter said, 'Dear Rector, there has been a little misunderstanding about the fifteen pounds.' The rector gaped, my dear. I am ready to swear he is completely unconscious of the whole thing. Besides, is it decent to imagine that a man in his position could do anything dishonest? I ask you!"

"I must admit," reported Miss Pipe to Miss White in the post office, "that when Miss Moss had mentioned the clock, he looked startled to the point of fright. He looked at me, raised his eyebrows, and then looked at the two ladies, with an expression which almost amounted to fear."

"It may have been meant to suggest that Miss Moss and Miss Patter were a little queer in the head?"

"Possibly so. But, as all of us know, that is not true. Eccentric, perhaps . . . sometimes I have thought, a bit mischievous . . . but not. . . ."

"I tell 'ee what I'd like to know," said old Compton in the bar of the Greyhound. "How d'ye suppose them old ladies got the clock across, down that slope and after dark an' all?"

"You'd be surprised how strong is old ladies," someone said. "Some of 'em is very strong."

"But not them old ladies," said old Compton. "That I won't believe." And opinion was with him.

DURING the days following their return, Miss Moss and Miss Patter entertained constant visitors.

"Of course, yes. Do come in. Here's the offending clock. You can imagine how very disturbed we are about the whole matter. It seems such a serious charge to lay at the poor rector's door."

"Surely you don't suggest——"

"We do not suggest anything. We are completely bewildered. We have reminded him of the occasion on which we playfully offered to buy the clock, but he says he never took our suggestion as serious and knows nothing of the clock's arrival here."

"Whatever will be decided in the end? I mean, a court of law——"

"Oh no, no, no, no! We shouldn't dream of letting it get so far. Why, we were speaking to the dear rector about it again this morning."

"And he said?"

"Why, he said he was much mortified that anyone in his flock could openly accuse him of stealing——"

"And we said that we were most distressed that our own rector could tacitly accuse us of lying——"

"And we parted most amicably, being unable to get any farther."

It was a deadlock.

The rector did not know whether he was, as he expressed it, on his head or his heels. At last, after praying much, searching both his memory and his doormat, he unwillingly summoned Henry again.

"Henry, I have never had anything to complain of in your behaviour. But if there is something on your conscience, do, for heaven's sake, say so."

"But, sir, I have told you, I know nothing about it. If you like, sir, I'll pretend I am the culprit. I'd do that for you, sir——"

"Good heavens, man! Are you suggesting that I did have the money?" said the rector, nettled.

"Oh no, sir. Certainly not. Merely that it would be a good way of explaining matters."

"I can't let you do that, Henry. I don't know what to do. I think those two old ladies must be mad, do you know, Henry? What do you think?"

But Henry didn't like to say, not to the rector.

In the end, the matter was settled

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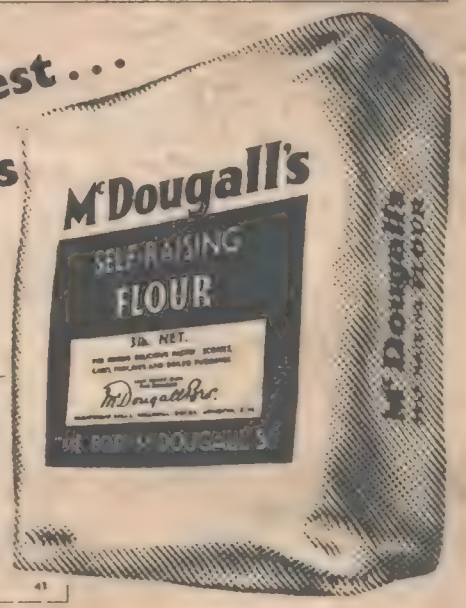

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by the magnanimity of Miss Moss and Miss Patter. "Rector," said Miss Moss sweetly, "we cannot have this ridiculous state of affairs going on any longer. Why, the whole village is poisoned with an atmosphere of distrust."

The rector pondered.

"I see no way out," he said at last, "but for you to confess you never sent the money and stole the clock, or for me to confess I sold you the clock and stole the money. Now which do you consider the worse of those two evils? I am rector, but you are respected parishioners. Which plan shall we adopt?" And he smiled amicably.

"Neither!" said Miss Patter triumphantly. "Miss Moss and I are willing to give the clock to the church and forget all about the fifteen pounds. We will all agree to say the money was taken from the doorstep."

"If," added Miss Moss, "we may have a plate with our names inscribed upon the clock."

AND SO, the following week, the little grandmother clock was back in its accustomed place on the west wall, and on its base in front was a new plate inscribed:

Given to their church by Freda Moss and Miriam Patter, with gratitude and affection.

"Given, indeed! Given back, they mean," said Mrs. Cross and the rector's side.

"Most generous, bless them. Especially 'gratitude and affection,'" said the other side.

The rector took tea with the two old ladies, to show the village there was no breach. He was convinced that now it was all over he would get hold of the truth. He determined very gently to ask them.

"But I should like to know before we close this mysterious affair for good," he began, "I should like to know the reason for your trick. I do so like to understand a joke, especially such a good one as this," he said, smiling.

"Trick!" shrieked Miss Moss.

"Trick, Rector!" echoed Miss Patter. "You are a nice one to talk of tricks!"

And so the affair had remained a complete mystery. For years, I suppose, people had gossiped and speculated until the incident commemorated by the brass plate on the clock had been gently covered over by the layer of years. The rector in question was dead. And after his death, a new rectory had been built, smaller, more compact, the old one being too large and rambling for the subsequent incumbents to keep up.

This was how I had come into possession of the old rectory, and how, when I removed some boards with dry rot near the front door, I found the faded envelope with the three five pound notes in it, which caused me to ferret out the story of the grandmother clock.

The old ladies in the dark must have pushed the envelope under the wooden step instead of under the door. (The old rectory door to this day is antique solid oak and has no letter box.)

"But," said I, when the story had been put together with enormous gusto by various people in the Greyhound, "that still doesn't explain how that clock got across the road from the church. Did it walk?"

And I addressed myself to Biddy Mullet, who had been one of the most active in reconstructing the tale.

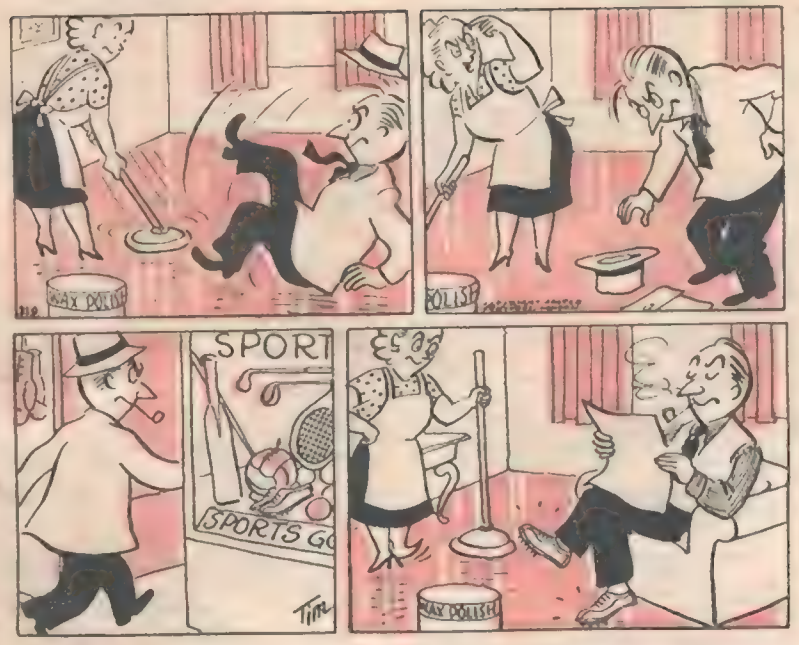
BIDDY scratched his cheek, grinned, looked sheepishly round. "That may well have done," he said seriously. "Strange things happen on All Hallows' Eve, an' no mistake."

He looked at me and winked, ordering more beer. I waited. It was ghosts that walked on All Hallows' Eve, not clocks. Biddy took a pull at his beer, and seemed to be considering.

"Jest supposing, now," he began, "there were a gang of young lads, up to their tricks. Well, that'd be the easiest thing in the world for them young devils to dare each other, you know how they do, to frighten them two pore old ladies that night. And what'd look more like a ghost in the dark hall than that little old clock, I'd like to know?" He flickered his eyelids. "Mind you," he went on, "I'm not a-going to say this is what did happen. I'm only putting it forward, like, as what might have happened, you follow. And, mind you, that'd be a very decent joke now, no one would deny," he said, beginning to smile. "That'd be a very decent joke, and no mistake."

He nodded his head, chuckling. "That turned out right well, and lasted longer than those young devils thought for, I reckon," said Biddy. And he threw back his head and laughed, with rich and reminiscent laughter. THE END

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*



SUPER-CHEFS OF THE LABORATORY

Continued from page 12

crossing the two varieties, just won't take to carbon dioxide—and we're now trying to find out why."

The Ditton Laboratory—as a result of whose work more than 80,000 tons of English apples are satisfactorily gas-stored every year—was started in 1927. "Pilot" experiments at Cambridge did not satisfactorily reveal what happened to the apples while they were in the ships' holds.

"Therefore, they decided to build a ship's hold," explains Dr. Fidler as he leads the way into a metal-bounded cavity 30 ft. by 20 ft., around whose tall structure the whole of the laboratory has been built. "In this we can store 250 tons of fruit at minus four degrees Fahrenheit."

Today, the main job of the Ditton Laboratory is the investigation of just how long apples, pears, tomatoes, cucumbers and cauliflowers, as well as dozens of other English-grown fruits and vegetables, can be kept in cold storage after they have been picked.

"Fruit breathes," explains Dr. Fidler. "Lower the temperature around it, and you lower its rate of breathing. The one trouble is that every fruit has a different critical temperature. Below that, you kill it."

Bananas, for instance, keep for longer periods as the temperature drops to 53 degrees Fahrenheit; go below that and they go bad more quickly. To complicate matters still more, different kinds of the same sort of fruit have different critical temperatures — 34 degrees for the Newton Wonder apple, 38 for the Blenheim, for instance.

A few years ago, the Ditton research workers discovered that if they stored the fruit in carbon dioxide it kept even longer and better. Cox's Orange Pippins, for instance, which can be cold-stored in air until the end of January, last well into April in cold gas-storage.

"There's even a story that we once won a prize at a local flower show with apples that were a year old," says Dr. Fidler. "I've never been able to track it down, but I'm assured that it's true."

Perhaps it is hardly surprising that Dr. Fidler, working at a station where rows of apples, each with a hypodermic needle stuck into it and drawing off gas, is a common sight, should have one thing in common with most other members of the staff. "Apples?" he says. "No, I've never really been keen on eating them."

Sir Ben, who visits all the food laboratories whenever he can, also directs research into the preservation of food from pest infestation—or, as he would probably prefer it, from pests ("Science frightens the layman because it is over-burdened with so much jargon," he says).

The scene at a major British port a few hours after the arrival of a big cargo of grain helps to show just what the problem involves. On one of the wharves is a blue-painted closed van, from the sides of which there trail dozens of rubber tubes, disappearing under mountains of grain in the hold of a nearby ship. Every hour or so throughout the night and day a man emerges from the van, withdraws the glass containers suspended at the ends of the rubber tubes, replaces them with other tubes, and goes back to the van for a few minutes' intense work.

He is a member of the D.S.I.R.'s Pest Infestation Research Laboratory outside Slough. His job is to test how well a fumigant, pumped into the ship's hold to kill insects in the grain, is doing its work by circulating through the cargo.

Insects Cause Famine

"How much grain has been saved from destruction by insects since the end of the war is not known exactly," says G. V. B. Herford, the director of the laboratory. "What we do know, however, is that the loss in stored cereal crops throughout the world has been estimated at about five per cent—enough in some cases to make all the difference between plenty and famine."

But it was found, says Herford, that by passing methyl bromide through the grain virtually all the insects were killed, so long as the concentration was strong enough—"rats and mice would be killed off far more quickly than insects," he says.

Then a snag arose. If this gas was passed through the grain in a ship's hold, some of the gas remained in the grain. Not enough to be measured by any known means but, possibly, enough to affect the grain. Exactly how much was the important question.

Harwell Answered It

For a long time there was no means of solving this problem. Then British atomic development produced Harwell. And today, at Slough, a by-product of Harwell's work is used which means less wastage in the wheat that goes to make Britain's bread.

Mixed into the methyl bromide used for fumigating is a minute quantity of a radio-active isotope. This "infects" all the methyl bromide. Then, when the grain has been fumigated, samples of it are passed before a radio-activity measurer, which reveals how much gas has been absorbed.

Today, the workers at Slough investigate not only the insects which attack grain, but those which are liable to do any sort of food damage.

"There are about seventy-five varieties that we get in this country," says Herford, "but only about twenty-four of them are really important—mostly small beetles and moths which, of course, do the damage when they're in the caterpillar stage."

His job is the protection, not only of food, but of anything else which insects attack. Two of the more unexpected discoveries made during the last few months, in fact, have been about the common clothes moth.

"We found that they bred more quickly the warmer you kept them," says Herford. "But only up to a point. Then, at about 40 degrees Centigrade, they all get killed off."

So that if clothes or blankets are put in an electric dryer, the temperature raised to about 40 degrees and kept there for about four hours, there should be no more trouble with moths.

The second discovery was even more surprising—a discovery whose results may have been seen recently in the shape of men clambering about on ladders under the eaves of buildings.

"It all started with one of our workers, who was a bit of a naturalist," says Herford. "He noticed that when we were called to investigate a bad case of clothes-moth infestation, there was invariably a disused bird's nest under the eaves."

As a result, the laboratory started a scientific investigation into the contents of hundreds of bird's nests throughout the country.

"We noted and analysed their contents and made some surprising discoveries. In one sparrow's nest we found 5,000 clothes-moth larvae. It now looks as though disused nests are a major source of infestation."

In spite of the good work that the Slough experts have done on moths, food-destroying insects are their main problem. In the Insectory, a series of huts attached to the laboratory, there are long shelves on which stand dozens of breeding-jars in which insects are hatched out by the hundred.

Counted One By One

They are treated carefully and frequently counted. The rice weevils, for instance, which are placed on a special glass plate and then sprayed with different kinds of fumigant, have actually been counted one by one.

"They are picked up in this," says Herford, pointing to what looks like a miniature vacuum cleaner, "and as each one goes into the bag the operator presses a little recorder which automatically counts them."

For treatment, they go into a circular chamber. Up to 20,000 a time can be treated with fumigants under the various conditions being tested. Flies are put, 120 at a time, into a glass-fronted box and then sprayed with fumigant.

"We can do thirty-two tests a day, so you can see that we need quite a lot of flies," says Herford.

The experts are used to large numbers, however. During tests carried out at a slaughterhouse, forty-five pounds of offal was exposed to attack for eight hours. At the end of it, blowfly maggots emerged—more than 75,000 of them.

It is just that sort of thing, the Pest Laboratory workers admit, that they are helping to stop. THE END

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THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS

Continued from page 18

needs. We succeeded. Pippa was the sweetest, happiest creature imaginable."

Miss Marple was silent a long time.

Carrie Louise turned away from the dressing-table. "I'm ready now. Perhaps you'll ask the inspector, or whatever he is, to come up to my sitting-room. He won't mind, I'm sure."

Inspector Curry did not mind. In fact he rather welcomed the chance of seeing Mrs. Serrocold on her own territory. As he stood there waiting for her, he looked round him curiously. There was an old snapshot of two little girls, one dark and lively, the other plain and staring out sulkily on the world from under a heavy fringe. He had seen that same expression that morning. "Pippa and Mildred" was written on the photograph. He was examining it when the door opened and Mrs. Serrocold came in.

She wore black, a floating and diaphanous black. Her little pink and white face looked unusually small under its crown of silvery hair, and there was a frailness about her that caught sharply at Inspector Curry's heart. He understood then why people were so anxious to spare Caroline Louise Serrocold everything that could be spared her.

She greeted him, asked him to sit down, and took a chair near him. It was less he who put her at her ease than she who put him at his. He started to ask his questions and she answered them readily and without hesitation. The failure of the lights, the quarrel between Edgar Lawson and her husband, the shot they had heard. . . .

"It did not seem to you that the shot was in the house?"

"No, I thought it came from the park outside."

"During the quarrel between your husband and this young fellow, Lawson, in the study, did you notice anybody leaving the hall?"

"Wally had already gone to see about the lights. Miss Bellever went out shortly afterwards—to get something, but I can't remember what."

"Who else left the hall?"

"Nobody, so far as I know."

"Would you know, Mrs. Serrocold?"

She reflected a moment. "No, I don't think I should."

"You were completely absorbed in what you could hear going on in the study?"

"Yes."

"And you were apprehensive as to what might happen there?"

"No—no, I wouldn't say that. I didn't think anything would really happen."

"But Lawson had a revolver."

"Yes."

"And was threatening your husband with it?"

"Yes. But he didn't mean it."

Inspector Curry managed to quell the exasperation he felt rising up in him. "You can't possibly have been sure of that, Mrs. Serrocold."

"Well, but I was sure. Edgar's only a boy. He was being melodramatic and silly and fancying himself as a bold, desperate character. Seeing himself as the wronged hero in a romantic story. I was quite sure he would never fire that revolver."

"But he did fire it, Mrs. Serrocold."

Carrie Louise smiled. "I expect it went off by accident."

Again exasperation mounted in Inspector Curry. "It was not accident. Lawson fired that revolver twice—and fired it at your husband. The bullets only just missed him."

Carrie Louise looked startled and then grave.

"I can't really believe that. Oh, yes"—she hurried on to forestall the inspector's protest—"of course, I have to believe it if you tell me so. But I still feel there must be a simple explanation. Perhaps Dr. Maverick can explain it to me."

"Oh, yes. Dr. Maverick will explain it all right," said Curry grimly. "Dr. Maverick can explain anything. I'm sure of that."

Unexpectedly, Mrs. Serrocold said: "I know that a lot of what we do here seems to you foolish and pointless, and psychiatrists can be very irritating sometimes. But we do achieve results, you know, Inspector. And though you probably won't believe it, Edgar is really devoted to my husband. He started this silly business about Lewis's being his father because he wants so much to have a father like Lewis. But what I can't understand is why he should suddenly get *violent*. He had been so very much better—really practically normal. Indeed, he has always seemed normal to me."

The inspector did not argue the point. He said: "The revolver that Edgar Lawson had was one belonging to your granddaughter's husband. Presumably Lawson took it from Walter Hudd's room. Now, tell me, have you ever seen *this* weapon before?"

On the palm of his hand he held out the small black automatic. Carrie Louise looked at it.

"No, I don't think so."

"I found it in the piano-stool. It has recently been fired. We haven't had time to check on it fully yet, but I should say that this is the weapon with which Mr. Gulbrandsen was shot."

She frowned. "And you found it in the piano-stool?"

"Under some very old music. Music that I should say had not been played for years."

"Hidden, then?"

"Yes. You remember who was at the piano last night?"

"Stephen Restarick."

"He was playing?"

"Yes. Just softly. A funny, melancholy little tune."

"When did he stop playing, Mrs. Serrocold?"

"When did he stop? I don't know."

"But he did stop? He didn't go on playing all through the quarrel?"

"No. The music just died down."

"Did he get up from the piano-stool?"

"I don't know. I've no idea what he did until he came over to the study door to try and fit a key to it."

"Can you think of any reason why Stephen Restarick should shoot Mr. Gulbrandsen?"

"None whatever." She added thoughtfully, "I don't believe he did."

"Gulbrandsen might have found out

Coming on May 31

CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM

by HAMMOND INNES

IN two weeks' time, JOHN BULL will publish the first instalment of a brilliant new novel by the best-selling author, Hammond Innes.

A critic who has previewed the book — it is about a British emigrant to Canada—gives this verdict: "A magnificently readable adventure story with a breathtaking sweep."

The novel is entitled **CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM** and it will be serialized in JOHN BULL in advance of book publication. Watch out for further details next week.

something discreditable about him."

"That seems to me very unlikely." Inspector Curry had a wild wish to reply: "Pigs may fly, but they're very unlikely birds." It had been a saying of his grandmother's. Miss Marple, he thought, was sure to know it. . . .

Carrie Louise came down the broad stairway, and three people converged upon her from different directions, Gina from the long corridor, Miss Marple from the library, and Juliet Bellever from the great hall.

Gina spoke first. "Darling!" she exclaimed passionately. "Are you all right? They haven't bullied you or given you third degree or anything?"

"Of course not, Gina. What odd ideas you have! Inspector Curry was charming and most considerate."

"So he ought to be," said Miss Bellever. "Now, Cara, I've got all your letters here and a parcel. I was going to bring them up to you."

"Bring them into the library," said Carrie Louise.

All four of them went into the library.

Carrie Louise sat down and began opening her letters. There were about twenty or thirty of them. As she opened them, she handed them to Miss Bellever, who sorted them into heaps, explaining to Miss Marple as she did so: "Three main categories. One—from relations of the boys. Those I hand over to Dr. Maverick. Begging letters I deal with myself. And the rest are personal—Cara gives me notes on how to deal with them."

The correspondence once disposed of, Mrs. Serrocold turned her attention to the parcel, cutting the string with scissors. Out of the neat wrappings there appeared an attractive box of chocolates tied up with gold ribbon.

She slipped off the ribbon and opened the box. Inside was a visiting-card. Carrie Louise looked at it with slight surprise.

"*With love from Alex,*" she read. "How odd of him to send me a box of chocolates by post on the same day he was coming down here."

Uneasiness stirred in Miss Marple's mind. She jumped up quickly. "Wait a minute, Carrie Louise. Don't eat one yet."

Mrs. Serrocold looked faintly surprised. "Why not, dear? They look delicious."

"Yes, they do. But wait while I ask. . . . Is Alex about the house, do you know, Gina?"

Gina said quickly: "Alex was in the hall just now, I think."

She went across, opened the door, and called him.

Alex Restarick appeared in the doorway a moment later.

"Madonna, darling! So you're up. None the worse?"

He came across to Mrs. Serrocold and kissed her gently on both cheeks.

Miss Marple said: "Carrie Louise wants to thank you for the chocolates."

Alex looked surprised. "What chocolates?"

"These chocolates," said Carrie Louise.

"But I never sent you any chocolates, darling."

"The box has got your card in," said Miss Bellever.

Alex peered down. "So it has. How odd. How very odd. . . . I certainly didn't send them."

"What a very extraordinary thing," said Miss Bellever.

"They look absolutely scrumptious," said Gina, peering into the box. "Look, Grandam, there are your favourite kirsch ones in the middle."

Miss Marple gently but firmly took the box away from her. Without a word, she took it out of the room and went to find Lewis Serrocold. It took her some time, because he had gone over to the college—she found him in Dr. Maverick's room there. She put the box on the table in front of him. He listened to her brief account of the circumstances. His face grew suddenly stern and hard.

Carefully, he and the doctor lifted out chocolate after chocolate and examined them.

"I think," said Dr. Maverick, "that these ones I have put aside have almost certainly been tampered with. You see the unevenness of the chocolate coating underneath? The next thing to do is to get them analysed."

"But it seems incredible," said Miss Marple. "Why, everyone in the house might have been poisoned!"

Lewis nodded. His face was still white and hard. "Yes. There is a ruthlessness—a disregard. . . ." He broke off. "Actually, I think all these particular chocolates are kirsch flavoured. That is Caroline's favourite. So, you see, there is knowledge behind this."

Miss Marple said quietly: "If it is as you suspect, if there is—poison—in these chocolates, then I'm afraid Carrie Louise will have to know what is going on. She must be put upon her guard."

Lewis Serrocold said heavily: "Yes. She will have to know that someone wants to kill her. I think that she will find it almost impossible to believe."

GINA pushed the hair back from her forehead and stood up. There was paint on her cheek and paint on her slacks. She and her selected helpers were busy on the backcloth of "The Nile at Sunset," for their next theatrical production.

"'Ere, Miss. Is it true as there's an 'ideous poisoner at work?" Gina swung round as the hoarse whisper reached her.

It was one of her young helpers who had asked the question: Ernie, the boy who had given her such valuable lessons in the manipulation of locks. Ernie's fingers were equally dexterous at stage carpentry, and he was one of the most enthusiastic theatrical assistants. His eyes now were bright and beady with pleasurable anticipation.

"Where on earth did you get that idea?" asked Gina indignantly.

Ernie shut one eye. "It's all round the dorms," he said. "Cor, we don't 'arf see life 'ere! Old Gulbrandsen done in yesterday, and now a secret poisoner. The same person sent the chocs as done in the old man, they reckon. What would you say, Miss, if I told you as I know 'oo it was?"

"You can't possibly know anything about it."

"Coo, can't I, neither? Supposin' I was outside last night and saw something?"

"How could you have been out? The

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Seen in picture on left is Mrs. V. A. Dangerfield, winner of £500 and TV for a *Bullet*. On right is Mrs. F. Barnett, recent Ideal Kitchen First Prize-winner, in whose new home at Droylsden JOHN BULL is at this moment installing the labour-saving equipment she has chosen.

Study the details of this week's novel, big "Brighter Home" prize and you will realize that your coupon below can capture for you one of the finest prizes yet offered in 1952.

Next week, *Bullets* £15,000 holiday campaign resumes with another sunshine offer. Meanwhile, see that you post off your coupon below for a prize which will brighten your home and fill your pocket for many years to come!

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4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated June 14, and in JOHN BULL dated June 21), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS in next week's JOHN BULL!

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Voice Of Britain
"Me,—Me,—Me!" *Spoiling.*

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For five winners of £6 and five of £4, see *"Bullets" Bulletin*.

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Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

We Elizabethans
Peace And Quiet
Leaving Britain
In The Trade War
The Great God, Gold
Oasis In The Desert
Helps Stalin
Man With A Plan
King Baby
Arrows Of Criticism
Grey Skies
What A Day When
Dad's Bees
Cheap Imitation
Apathy's Blight
Bottles, Tins And
Colonel Chutneigh
A Woman's Right
In A Deck-chair
Went Bump In The Night

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Home Without A.....
"How Do You.....?"
Her New.....
Still A Little.....
Paying .....
Thought He Was....., But

POST ENTRY
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(or Xword No. 787)
"John Bull,"
Long Acre,
London, W.C.2
(Comp.)

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Across Clues XWORD 787

1. Person becoming an invalid often experiences a change of this
6. People generally think of dungeon as in this part of a castle
8. May prevent you from making a good stroke
11. Your nose will probably give you a pretty fair idea of one
13. Coarse one may not be at all funny
14. If at a party a song is sung thus, it may well have depressing effect
15. Wet weather can make no difference to

Down Clues

2. It isn't generally known to kill both birds and fish
3. Art critic should know how to do this
4. They can be very misleading
5. It's easy for a person to be upset by unaccustomed ones
7. Sportsman who does this wildly may easily lose his balance
9. To lose that essential this can make the player lose heart
10. Good one will take measure of a bowler
12. A country walk is apt to be spoilt if it is this

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college is locked up after roll-call at seven."

"Roll call! I can get out whenever I likes, Miss. Locks don't mean nothing to me. Get out and walk around the grounds just for the fun of it, I do."

Gina said: "I wish you'd stop telling lies, Ernie."

"Who's telling lies?"

"You are. You tell lies and you boast about things that you've never done at all."

"That's what you say, Miss. You wait till the coppers come round and ask me all about what I saw last night."

"Well, what did you see?"

"Ah!" said Ernie. "Wouldn't you like to know?"

GINA made a rush at him and he beat a strategic retreat. Stephen came over from the other side of the theatre and joined Gina. They discussed various technical matters and then, side by side, they walked back towards the house.

"They all seem to know about Grandam and the chocs," said Gina. "The boys, I mean. How do they get to know?"

"Local grapevine of some kind."

"What puzzles me most," said Gina, "is Alex's card. Stephen, surely it was very stupid to put Alex's card in the box when he was actually coming down here."

"Yes, but who knew he was coming down here? He decided to come on the spur of the moment, and sent a telegram. Probably the box was posted by then. And if he hadn't come down, putting his card in would have been quite a good idea. Because he does send Caroline chocolates sometimes."

He paused for a moment, then went on slowly: "What I simply can't understand is——"

"Is why anyone should want to poison Grandam," Gina cut in. "I know. It's *inconceivable*! She's so adorable—and absolutely everyone *does* adore her."

Stephen did not answer. Gina looked at him sharply.

"I know what you're thinking, Steve!"

"I wonder."

"You're thinking that Wally—doesn't adore her. But Wally would never poison anyone. The idea's laughable."

"The loyal wife!"

"Don't say that in that sneering tone of voice."

"I didn't mean to sneer. I think you *are* loyal. I admire you for it. But darling Gina, you can't keep it up, you know."

"What do you mean, Steve?"

"You know quite well what I mean. You and Wally don't belong together. It's just one of those things that doesn't work. He knows it, too. The split is going to come any day now. And you'll both be much happier when it has come."

Gina said: "Don't be idiotic."

Stephen laughed. "Come now, you can't pretend that you're suited to each other or that Wally's happy here."

"Oh, I don't know what's the matter with him," cried Gina. "He sulks the whole time. He hardly speaks. I—I don't know what to do about him. Why can't he enjoy himself here? We had such fun together once—everything was fun—and now he might be a different person. Why do people have to change so?"

"Do I change?"

"No, Steve, darling. You're always Steve. Do you remember how I used to tag round after you in the holidays?"

"And what a nuisance I used to think you—that miserable little kid, Gina. Well, the tables are turned now. You've got me where you want me, haven't you, Gina?"

Gina said quickly: "Idiot." She went on hurriedly, "Do you think Ernie was lying? He was pretending he was roaming about in the fog last night, and hinting that he could tell things about the murder. Do you think that might be true?"

"True? Of course not. You know

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No. 1

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